

Letters
to Samnue
Austin

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TWELVE LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

REV. SAMUEL AUSTIN, A. M.

IN WHICH

HIS VINDICATION OF PARTIAL WASHING
FOR CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

CONTAINED IN

TEN LETTERS,

AS REVIEWED AND DISPROVED.

BY DANIEL MERRILL, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN SEDGWICK.

In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments
of men. JESUS CHRIST.

Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge:
ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hin-
dered. JESUS CHRIST.

BOSTON:

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit.

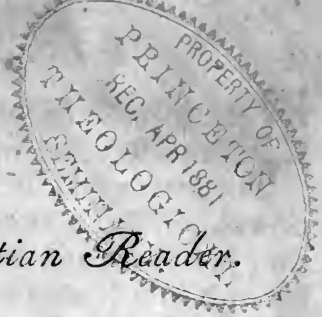
BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the eleventh day of April, in the thirtieth year of the independence of the United States of America, **MANNING & LORING**, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, *to wit*:—"Twelve Letters, addressed to Rev. **SAMUEL AUSTIN**, A. M. in which his Vindication of Partial Washing for Christian Baptism, contained in Ten Letters, is reviewed and disproved. By **DANIEL MERRILL**, A. M. Pastor of the Church of Christ in Sedgwick."

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N. GOODALE, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

A true Copy of Record. Attest:

N. GOODALE, *Clerk*



To the Christian Reader.

WHATEVER be your denomination, your wisdom is, to seek the knowledge and practice of the truth. In the following Letters you will find discussed some of the most important articles of the Christian religion: some of the great and leading points in which Jesus, as Captain of the Lord's host, asserts his kingly authority, are set to view; as well as some of those in which Antichrist asserts his authority, are exposed. The highly interesting contention, at the present, is, who shall reign over us, and who shall give us laws, Christ or Antichrist! The Pope and his clergy, and all who are in part or whole blinded by the smoke, the errors, which came out of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 2. say Antichrist's authority, in whole or part, is founded in the word of God. The author of these pages has endeavoured to show, that Antichrist hath, for his ordinances of sprinkling, &c. no support from the Revelation of Jesus Christ; and that his temporising, defiling, and abominable errors, so far as they concern the pres-

ent controversy, have not one passage, from Genesis to Revelation, in their favour.

The reader will find a spirit of extermination manifested against the errors of Mr. Austin: but the reader is desired not to feel in his own breast, nor to suppose that the author possessed in his, the same spirit towards Mr. Austin's person or character, which is expressed towards his errors. The author takes liberty to assure every person into whose hands this pamphlet may fall, that he hath no contemptible idea of Mr. Austin's character or talents; nor is he without strong hopes that Mr. Austin is, generally speaking, a cordial friend to truth, notwithstanding he hath embraced and laboured to vindicate several very hurtful and bewildering errors. All God's children have not as yet obeyed the heavenly command, to come out from the man of sin, from Antichrist, to touch not the unclean thing, and be separate.

Whilst Mr. Austin, and many others, who have left the doctrines of the man of sin, are yet bewildered by some of his ordinances, we are not to count them as enemies, but to admonish them as friends, and be ever ready to embrace them, the moment in which they will obey our *King*, and come out, and touch not the abominations of the mother of harlots.

There are many who will not enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and those who are entering in by Christ's gospel ordi-

nance, baptism, they hinder. In this matter they defile themselves, and are yet with the *man of sin*, who still hinders the full glory of the church.

Reader, if you will not be baptized yourself, and thus enter into the visible church, the kingdom of heaven on earth, be careful how you hinder those who are entering in. Christ's kingdom must come, and it will come: be careful, lest you be found even to fight against God.

If the errors of sprinkling for baptism, unbelievers for the subjects, and unbaptized persons for church members, be not of Christ, but of the world; reject them as relicks of Antichrist. The following Letters, if read with a prayerful, teachable spirit, will show that the above are errors, not being found in the gospel of Christ, but being contrary from the word of the Son of God.

Reader, are you a Christian, and yet unwilling to know the laws of your King! Do you find that within you there are strong prejudices, and the risings of a corrupt mind, against hearing and practising as the more noble Bereans did, when Paul was the preacher? For Zion's sake, for truth's sake, and for your own sake, remember that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Have courage and resolution enough to hear and know the truth, and practise it when known.

Praying that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may give you to see the rising church, as now coming up from the wilderness, showing herself in gospel beauty and simplicity, and to espouse her cause with your whole heart,

I am, reader,
your's and the church's
willing servant,
THE AUTHOR.

SEBOWICK, DECEMBER 25, 1805.

LETTERS

TO

The Rev. SAMUEL AUSTIN.

LETTER I.

REVEREND SIR,

WITH pain and pleasure I continue in the field of theological controversy. It is painful to me, that the time, talents, and zeal of good men, should be occupied to give currency and continuance to error. In the meantime, it is grateful to my feelings to discover the same good men relinquishing, by little and little, their indefensible ground. The concessions and profession, which are found in your Letters to me, furnish hope that you will yet discover truth and embrace it.

You concede,

1. That the present controversy cannot be settled by an appeal to the Greeks or Romans; to the monk of Palestine, Jerome; to the reformer of Geneva, or to the English defender of the Baptists; or even by an appeal to church history, or to any other writings which are merely human.*

2. That when baptism was introduced among the Jews, in the days of John, and in the days of Christ and his apostles, it was not administered to infants; and that the evidence for infant baptism does not, in our day, amount to demonstration.†

3. You concede, that the Bible is the only book by which the present controversy must be settled.‡

4. You concede, that our English translation of the Bible is so perfect, that every argument, which is founded in any degree upon a different translation than what is found in our common Bibles, "has an objection at its foundation."§

* Pages 66, 107 of the Letters to the author.

†. Pages 7, 75.

‡. Page 108.

§. Page 72.

This last concession has its importance, not as it respects either you or me, but as it respects common readers, that they may rest satisfied that the present translation is sufficiently accurate and explicit. Some other concessions I may mention, as the subject shall require.

Your profession, Sir, is excellent, and worthy of a Christian, in every contest. It is this: "As for me, I consider truth infinitely preferable to any party interest, and promise to you, that I will yield to evidence as soon as it is presented."

It is now expedient that I notice another concession, which you give to the public, in page 7 of your Letters; and in the following words:—"Through the most of my ministry, though I prevailingly believed that the doctrine and practice of the Pædobaptists, generally considered, were authorized in the Scriptures, I had not that *full conviction* on *these points* which I had respecting many other articles. It is not more than three years, since by some particular incidents, my attention was called up afresh to the subject: I then determined to investigate it as closely as my abilities would allow: I accordingly examined the Scriptures from beginning to end—got into my hands and read all the publications on the subject which I could command, and the result of my inquiries was just the reverse of yours. It appears to me that no *determinate mode* of applying water in baptism was clearly pointed out in the Scriptures, or made essential to the validity of the ordinance."

This concession of yours, Sir, together with its issue, inclines me to relate to you, in this place, and through you to the public, some of the providences which led to my conviction, and in the result, to my conversion from some of my errors.

For nearly ten years after I entertained some hope that I was born of the Spirit, I do not recollect of its being once suggested to my mind, that there was any considerable difficulty in supporting sprinkling for baptism, and infants for the subjects. In the year 1790, whilst in pursuit of theological knowledge, I had put into my hands a short history of infant baptism, written by a gentleman in New York. This pamphlet produced its witnesses for infant baptism, century preceding century, till it came nearly to the apostolic age; but it left a blank, as all other histories of the same kind have done, between the period in which we first hear of infant baptism, and the apostles. This deficiency of historic evidence I sensibly felt. This chain of evidence was at the time quite pleasing to me, so far as it went; but it

wanted a few more links to reach to the apostles, so as to unite their practice and ours together: however, the author did as well as he could, in the cause which he was labouring to defend. I was now left to believe, without evidence, if I could, that infant baptism came down, in regular succession, from the apostles to us. This I believed. Not only so, but I considered infant baptism a Bible doctrine, though not quite so explicitly expressed as I could have wished. From this time I had occasionally some small difficulties; but they were, for the most part, but quite small, and of short continuance. The Bible I believed to be full of the doctrine of infant baptism, though I knew of no particular place which was fully to the point. I considered it to be a very singular thing, that we had no example of infant baptism. Said I to myself, Had there been one example, it would have put the matter beyond a doubt. Whether example or not, still I concluded it must be a Bible doctrine: for I *supposed* that the greatest of men, that the wisest of men, and that the most learned also, had always practised it: besides, I took it for granted (for there was no evidence for it) that baptism had succeeded circumcision, and that the same subjects which were of old circumcised, were now to be baptized. Moreover, there are several passages of the New Testament, which have been thought, by great, good, and learned men, to favour infant baptism. I thought the same. If you, Sir, will have patience with me, I will mention some of these scriptures, and especially those which I viewed as cardinal texts upon the subject. I will also tell you how I then understood them, likewise what are my present thoughts respecting them. The texts which were considered to be, more than any other, in favour of infant baptism, and which appeared sufficient to authorize the practice, are the following.

1. Mat. xix. 13, 14, 15. 'Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them: but Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.'

2. The parallel text, Mark x. 13, 14, 15, 16. 'And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them: but when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them

not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.'

3. The same account, as related by Luke, xviii. 15, 16, 17, was thought to afford some additional light. Luke says, 'They brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them: but Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.'

4. Acts ii. 39. 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'

5. 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.'

Upon these texts I reasoned in the following manner.

Little children, young children, and infants were brought to Christ; he approved of their being brought; he was displeased with such as forbade them; we should bring our children to him; what way so suitable as to present them in baptism: besides, Christ said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven. How could infants be of the kingdom of heaven, otherwise than by being baptized, and so admitted members of the visible church? It was also my thought, that the promise mentioned Acts ii. 39. was the same that was made to Abraham, Gen. xvii.: and, in addition to the above, Paul tells us, that when one of the parents is a believer, the children are holy. Hence, my conclusion was, that infant baptism was warranted by Scripture, when not one of the texts says so much as a word about baptism; but each one relates to quite a different subject, as you may see by examining the connexion of each.

Should more evidence be required, my erroneous judgment was, that household baptism, as recorded Acts xvi. 15 and 33. and 1 Cor. i. 16. would make up any deficiency; when in neither of the passages is there a word said of any child or adult being baptized upon the faith of another. Upon this foundation, if it may be called a foundation, my faith with respect to infant baptism, or with respect to what is of late years so called, rested, with little interruption, till

the beginning of 1799; at which time I felt some hesitancy as to its being supported by the oracles of God.

My present thoughts with respect to the above texts, you will permit me to defer till I write you again; and in the mean time believe me to be

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

REVEREND SIR,

IN the close of my last, the thought was suggested, that my mind hesitated, in the beginning of 1799, as to the validity of infant baptism; it did, however, preponderate in its favour. But in the winter and spring of this year, a new scene opened to view. At this time a remarkable and extensive reformation took place among my people; and among the converts, there were not less than twenty or thirty who were dissatisfied with infant baptism, and many of them doubted of sprinkling being the baptism of the gospel. It became my indispensable duty to take up the subject, and canvass it as well as I could. It was attempted; but I found not my path so clear of difficulties as it was wished to be. However, my ignorance and unbelief sustained me for the time: and by not understanding, and by misapplying Mark vii. 4. and by going with the young converts to the water, and there partially washing them for baptism, their minds were in measure satisfied. At the same time, they had encouragement that the subject of baptism should be soon taken under consideration again, and that they might expect to have it then more fully and satisfactorily explored. Thus the matter apparently rested with them; but my own mind was not long at a time without queries upon the subject. I now read my Bible over and over again; every pamphlet and every page written by any Pædobaptist, upon infant sprinkling, I read with eagerness, wherever I could find it; but whenever I lit upon a leaf written in favour of gospel baptism, I either neglected it wholly, or read it with prejudice. My object was not so much to know what baptism was, as to prove that sprinkling was baptism. I pursued this fruitless search for nearly six years. At intervals my mind was satisfied, largely so, that sprinkling, or rather that partial washing, was gospel baptism, and infants

the proper subjects; as fully persuaded of this being the case, perhaps, as you were, after three years search. My mind almost perpetually gave judgment in favour of infant sprinkling, and seldom, if ever, doubted but it would pass for baptism. I was willingly ignorant of the true gospel baptism. Not only was I willingly ignorant, but, like my Pædobaptist brethren, I chose darkness, in this matter, rather than light. I was much like them also in another particular, in that I too much said, in both words and practice, that any application of water, in the name of the Lord Jesus, was baptism; and that there was no determinate way, clearly pointed out in the Bible, by which water should be applied. For sprinkling, as being gospel baptism, I long and vainly fought; and because I could not find it, I more vainly concluded, that the matter was all left at such loose ends that nobody could know; and so we must practise, and be agreed about the matter as well as we could. However, my mind could not, for a long period at a time, rest in this state of gross darkness and ignorance. Besides, my people did not forget my encouragement, that the subject of baptism should be again taken up, and more fully handled; nor did they forget to remind me of my promise.

But the more I studied on the subject, the more I discovered my darkness, and my unpreparedness to treat on it publicly. Whilst searching every where for data to prove sprinkling or partial washing to be baptism, it used occasionally to be suggested, Who are gospel subjects of baptism? This became to me a serious question in the year 1804. My difficulty was, indeed, not small; yet I thought myself justified in continuing my practice. In August of this year, just before the administration of infant sprinkling, this text somewhat forcibly struck my mind, 'He that doubteth is damned if he eat.' In a moment the following thought came to my relief, *I doubt the lawfulness of my refusing to administer.* In this strait, my judgment was, that duty called me to proceed.

The next Lord's day, in the morning, one of my brethren, who had long doubted infant baptism, came and requested to have his children, eight in number, baptized. This request was at that time to me an unpleasant one: I hesitated. My conscience would but barely consent to the baptism of infants.* Here were children of sufficient age

* I frequently use the words, baptism and to baptize, in their modern and perverted sense, to signify rantism and to rantize. It is desired that the reader will understand me, and that the opposers of gospel baptism will take no advantage, from the words being thus used.

to be taught, and to believe for themselves. The difficulty which I felt was mentioned to the father of these children: he was desired to wait for an answer till the intermission: I then took him, with two of my deacons, and conversed considerably upon the subject. It was somewhat plain to me, and mentioned to them, that, going upon the covenant of circumcision, it was inconsistent to baptize an infant of eight days, and to refuse another of twice eight years. The more I thought and spake on the subject, the more my difficulties increased. At this juncture, I sensibly felt that wisdom was needed from on high. I mentioned to the two deacons, that it was, in my judgment, expedient that there should be a day of fasting and prayer appointed, that we might, among other requests, ask of God wisdom and knowledge with respect to baptism, and the fit subjects. The deacons agreed to the expediency of the proposal, and the brother consented to defer the baptism of his children. Not long after, at a public conference of the brethren, my proposal was agreed to, and a day was appointed.

The day was solemnly observed: and with pleasure I now give information to all whom it may concern, and for the encouragement of my erring brethren, and especially for such as are in sensible darkness respecting the subjects of our difficulty, that, to the best of my recollection, every brother and sister, who readily united in this day of seeking wisdom of God, hath been favoured with light, and very comfortable satisfaction, respecting those things concerning which we asked counsel of God. Our darkness and doubts, however, were not removed all at once, but by little and little; and we were set at liberty one after another, much as it is in days of reformation.

Several manifestly felt no need of wisdom; they still remain in their traditionary darkness.

The day of our fasting and prayer to the Father of Lights, for wisdom to guide us into the knowledge and practice of his will, being now ended, my mind was still in anxious suspense. My thoughts now turned to infant baptism. Some expectation I possessed, that, if nothing could be found for infant sprinkling, something might for baptizing, that is, for immersing them. My case was somewhat like that of a drowning man,—I was disposed to catch at every straw which might assist in saving my traditionary notions from sinking: still nothing could I find which appeared so to comport with the directions and pattern given, as to afford a resting place.

Both day and night my mind was filled with careful and prayerful meditation. My anxiety increased from week to week; so did a careful search after the mind and will of God. My darkness likewise increased, till it was darkness very sensibly to be felt.

For a week or ten days I could discern scarce a ray of light respecting baptism, or the subjects of baptism, from any quarter. Whilst in this condition, I was apprehensive that the result would be, that I should never know what the gospel baptism is, but should, in this dark and doubtful state, be dismissed from my people, and go preaching the gospel where I might find a place.

Notwithstanding all my darkness, I still believed that there was such an ordinance as gospel baptism, which ought to be administered in the use of water; and that God was able to show me what it was. But my proud heart, at times, could not endure the thought of being a Baptist; however, God, of his infinite mercy, as I now consider it, kept me as in Egyptian darkness, till my proud heart was subdued, and my stubborn will bowed, and I made willingly to say, Lord, not my will, but thine, be done; make me a Pædobaptist, a Pædorantist, or even a Baptist, or any thing, as thou wilt.

Almost from this moment the clouds began to scatter, and the glorious, the important, the precious light of gospel baptism began to shine into my anxious and benighted mind. Directly upon it, I began to write and deliver to my people those Sermons which you have professedly examined.

You will probably consider me to have possessed a very proud heart, which could be so unwilling to be a Baptist. Such a proud heart you, Sir, and many others may possess, and be as insensible of it as I once was. You may imagine, that, were the Baptists right, you would as readily be a Baptist as any thing: but, Sir, as I once heard a dying woman say, "When we are living, we talk of dying; but when death comes, it is another thing:" so, whilst we are upon good terms with the world, we may talk of being Baptists; but when the trial comes, it is another thing.

During my days of darkness and trial, the texts mentioned in the close of my last letter, came, I know not how often, within my view: perhaps I have fifty times turned to one or the other of them, wishing them to speak, "infants the subjects of gospel baptism." In years past I took it for granted that they spake this language somewhat plainly; but my thoughts upon these texts are different for the present: they shall be now laid before you.

The text in Mat. xix. 13, 14, 15. is, 'Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them: but Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.'

My thoughts respecting this passage are,

1. That here is nothing said or intimated, directly or indirectly, about baptizing children upon the faith of their parents, or upon their being the children of believers.

2. These children were not brought for baptism, but that Jesus would lay his hands on them and pray, or bless them, as good old Jacob, when dying, blessed the sons of Joseph.

3. Some such little children, as were brought to Christ, are of the kingdom of heaven, and fit subjects of it too, as you may see in the preceding chapter, ver. 3 and 6, where it is thus written, 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall offend one of these *little ones*, which *believe* in me.' If you will turn to chap. xxi. 15, 16. you will find these *little children* mentioned again; and also some farther information,—that of such is the kingdom of heaven: it is thus related,—'And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the *children* crying in the temple, and saying, *Hosanna* to the Son of David; they were fore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? and Jesus saith unto them, Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of *babes* and *sucklings* thou hast perfected praise?'

4. If this passage hath any indirect reference to the baptism of little children, it is manifestly against your practice or custom of infant baptism; and informs you what children are to be baptized,—such as are fit for the kingdom of heaven, such as believe in Christ, or such babes and sucklings as cry, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.'

My thoughts are similar, with respect to the parallel passages, which are related by Mark and Luke.

The text in Acts ii. 39. is, 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'

My thoughts on this text are,

1. That the promise is unto all, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, parents or children.

2. That the thing promised was the gift of the Holy Ghost, as Peter manifestly informs us in the words immediately preceding the text.

3. That the gift of the Holy Ghost was what was spoken of by the prophet Joel, ii. 28. as quoted by Peter, Acts ii. 17. 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' This is the very promise about which Peter had been preaching.

4. That, as Peter said to his hearers, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;' so it is the duty of all men who hear the gospel to do likewise, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, to quicken, comfort, and seal them: for the promise still is to all, parents and children, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

5. That the chapter which contains this text sufficiently explains it, and renders it not only easy to be understood, but difficult to mistake its true meaning.

There is scarce a text in the Bible which has been oftener pressed to the service of infant baptism, and there is not one less to the purpose.

The text in 1 Cor. vii. 14. is, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.'

My thoughts, Sir, on this text, are,

1. That it hath nothing to say about baptism, for it or against it. The apostle is treating on a subject quite aside from that of baptism. The subject, as you well know, is about husbands and wives living together, after one of the parties is converted. The subject of baptism does not once come to view in the whole matter.

2. The apostle tells us, that the infidel husband is sanctified, or made holy, as really and as truly so, and for aught appears, in the same sense of holiness, as the children are holy. This text, therefore, if you will *make* it relate to baptism, proves too much; it proves that the infidel and idolatrous husband, as well as the children, is to be baptized. This, Sir, you, and every man who is not blinded by ignorance or prejudice, would blush to advocate. This text is, therefore, nothing for infant baptism.

As to the texts, Acts xvi. 15 and 33. and 1 Cor. i. 16. which speak of the baptism of households, my thoughts of them are,

1. As expressed in my Sermons.
2. That these texts are totally silent about infant baptism, and that they would, therefore, be never pressed in to the support of it, were not that point very difficult of proof.
3. There is, on the whole, no intimation that there was, in either of the households, any one baptized, without being at the time a visible believer. As to Lydia's household, we read in the last verse of the chapter of the brethren in her house. As to the jailer's,—Paul told him, that if he believed on the Lord Jesus he should be saved, and his house. How could they be saved, if they did not believe? for 'he that believeth not shall be damned:' besides, we are told in the connexion, that the jailer rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

You are pleased to tell me, in your exposition, "that the Greek participle which is rendered believing, is in the singular number." Every English reader, who is acquainted with the construction of language, knows it is the same in our common Bibles: what, therefore, do you gain by referring to the Greek? Should you write again, please to inform me by what authority you contradict the translators of the Bible, and injure the sense of this text, by telling us, that the jailer believed in God and rejoiced *domestically*.

With regard to Stephanas's household, they were addicted to the ministry of the saints, and this too, for aught appears, from the day of their baptism.

The above texts, which are your principal ones, being insufficient to support infant baptism, it must fall: for it is a general truth,—The foundation being removed, the superstructure must come down. These texts have been placed, by the Pædobaptists, as the foundation of infant baptism. These texts say nothing about it; yet they say as much as does any other in all the Bible. The fair conclusion is, infant baptism must fall, or stand upon nothing: or, which is the same thing, it must fall, or stand upon texts which have no connexion with it, and which say nothing about it. We wish your denomination would be kind enough to be as silent about infant baptism, in both precept and example, as is the Bible; then would the controversy be ended.

Now, Sir, permit me to add a few reflections from what we have passed over.

The *first* is—When I found “that I had not that full conviction on the points of what is called pædobaptism,” my course of inquiry was very similar to yours; and after I had pursued the same course three years, my conclusion was the same with yours, that the mode of applying water in baptism was not very determinately pointed out, but that water applied in almost any way might answer the intent of the great Institutor. When I had inquired three years more, *fasting and prayer being added*, my conclusion was the reverse.

The *second* is—That the reasons, and the only reasons, why I could find no determinate mode of applying water in baptism, are these: first, I would not believe that immersion was the mode, or was the gospel baptism; and secondly, I could find no other mentioned; hence I concluded that none was prescribed.

Third. You, Sir, having been as I once was, you may be as I now am.

Wishing you much light and more grace,

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

REVEREND SIR,

I NOW proceed to examine, as critically and as concisely as I conveniently can, your examination of my Seven Sermons.

Whilst your Letters shall pass in review, I shall endeavour the ruin of the errors which they contain. But, believe me, Sir, my desire is, that not so much as one shaft may be aimed either against your person, reputation, or piety. My business is not what you or your denomination are, as to numbers, talents, or piety; but my business is with your errors, the ways by which you support them, and with the truths which ruin them. Whilst I write not for you only, but for all who may read, you must give me leave to use great plainness of speech.

The errors which you advocate and I oppose, are of such magnitude, and fraught with such evil consequences to both saints and sinners, that we should possess all that calmness in meditation and expression, which an earnest contention for the faith will permit.

The errors, Sir, which you plead for, and I against, are three:

1. Sprinkling, or partial washing, is baptism.
2. That manifest unbelievers are proper and gospel subjects of baptism.
3. That baptism is not necessary to membership in the visible church of Christ.

These three principles of yours are considered to be errors, and at war with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. You consider them to be a part of his gospel. What you have in your Letters said, directly or indirectly, in their favour, it will be a part of my business to refute. It also belongs to me to show the inconclusiveness of your supposed refutation of my arguments in favour of the three following truths.

1. Immersion, in the name of the Lord Jesus, or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the only gospel baptism.

2. No person hath a right to gospel baptism, but upon his making a profession of gospel faith.

3. No person is a member of Christ's visible church till he be baptized.

From these principles you draw some popular objections against my sermons. In the second sentence of your first Letter you say, and you meant the world should hear it, "that I must now consider you as one of the antichristian world." In the 8th, 9th, and 10th pages you very much enlarge this of all objections the most popular. My readers, Sir, shall have your objection set before them in its full strength: for if it be conclusive against my principles, let it destroy them; but if it have no weight, let it be set down for nothing. Your objection is in the following words:

"Are you sure that you act under the divine approbation, whilst merely because I am not a baptized person, according to your notion of baptism, you place me without, where are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie? To these extremities you are driven, by the radical principle of your book, by holding that complete immersion is the only Christian baptism, and that baptism is essential to a person's being a visible member of Christ's kingdom: and by this principle you shut out thousands with whom, in regard to piety and Christian respectability, probably you, certainly I, can claim no comparison. You enroll among the visible enemies of God, Leighton, Flavel, Doddridge, Watts, Gardiner, the Edwardses, the Brainerds, and a multitude of eminently

holy men, whose names it is impossible you should recollect but with deep veneration."

Yes, Sir, I recollect their names with veneration, and their errors with regret. But what hath veneration or regret to do with principles?

I must here state three things :

1. That the manner in which you throw the objection before the public, has a very natural tendency to give an incautious reader a very unjust idea of the tendency of my principles.

2. That great men and great names can never change truth into a lie.

3. Your argument against the justness of my principles is not sufficient to prove them wrong.

1. The manner in which you throw the objection before the public, has a very natural tendency to give an incautious reader a very unjust idea of the tendency of my principles. He would naturally enough conclude that I must, if consistent with myself, believe that no one except the Baptists has any religion; that I consider and treat all others as being impenitent and ungodly; yes, as being "profligate and unregenerate." A more unjust idea could not be communicated. Such an idea is not only inconsistent with my principles, but they forbid any person's suggesting that such an idea could fairly be deduced from them. One of our principles is, that no person is a fit subject of baptism, unless he be a penitent, a godly, a regenerate person.

Besides, Sir, I am not singular, in considering men to be not of the visible church, but visibly with the-world, till they are baptized. This hath ever been the sentiment of the church. It was always mine, since I had any sentiment on the subject.

I will put a case. Suppose there be a reformation at this present time at Worcester, where you reside. Suppose fifty persons of the brightest talents be converted. Not one of them has been baptized, or even so much as sprinkled. I providentially ride through the town next week. By chance I meet Mr. Austin in the street, and put this question,—Have those very respectable characters, who have been of late hopefully converted, joined the church, (meaning the visible church)? your reply would be ready, No, but some of them have passed examination, and give full satisfaction, who with the rest will probably join in a short time. Indeed, Sir, you would have no idea of telling me that they belonged to the visible church, unless you are contrary from all men whom

I have ever yet seen. It is an offence against the common sense of Christians of all denominations, who believe in gospel ordinances, to advocate, that persons belong to the visible church, and yet never baptized. Were your side not hard pressed, you would never think of such an expedient to get out of difficulty.

This being the case, the Baptists do but consider and treat you and your denomination, as you do the wisest and most pious among yourselves, till they be baptized. Hence, you can but see that you condemn in us what you allow, and almost universally practise among yourselves. Happy, Sir, is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.

2. Great men and great names can never change truth into a lie.

Suppose our principles be such as to lead us to believe, that some great and good men, who will not join the visible church, are not members of it. By the way, this is just what you believe yourselves. Because we believe thus, do you wish us to be reproached before all men, as being superstitiously different from all Christians and reasonable men? Besides, my dear Sir, what have great and venerable names to do in determining in your favour the truth or falsehood of a principle, when the faith and practice of the same great and good men have always been in the face of your theory? Did you not introduce this whole affair, about excluding pious and venerable men from communion, in order to prepossess the feelings and passions of your readers in your favour, before you ventured to try the strength of the gospel principles, or those which you are pleased to term mine? If you did not, I see but one other motive which you could have, that is, to make room for a retreat, and save for yourself a standing in the visible church, though you might not be able to prove sprinkling or partial washing to be baptism, or to refute my arguments for immersion.

3. Your argument against the justness of my principles is not able to prove them wrong.

Your argument is, Great names and confessors. But great names have no authority to overturn principles which are founded on revelation. As to confessors, you have none. Not one hath been called to suffer in defence of your principles, and against mine. If none have suffered in defence of your principles, your host of confessors are at most but great names. Hence, your whole argument is, if my principle be just, many great and good men have (through

neglect of duty, for want of light, inclination, or opportunity) never been members of the visible kingdom or church of Christ. Your argument I grant, but deny that it injures my principles. If your argument destroy my principles, one of these two things is true;—either 1. That there never were any good men among any heathen nation, tribe, or language, where the visible church of Christ was unknown; or 2. That these good men belonged to Christ's visible church, where there was none. To assert the first would be presumption; to advocate the last would be absurd: hence my principles as yet are out of danger.

Sir, you do not appear fully to comprehend the Baptist idea of church membership; it is therefore expedient to come to definitions.

1. None but visible saints are to be baptized.
2. Every baptized person, so long as he manifests himself to be a visible saint, is a member of the visible church.
3. Every baptized person, who joins himself to a society of baptized believers, is a member of a particular visible church.

In your note, pages 12 and 13, you see fit to contradict what appears to have been the general, if not the universal, sentiment of the church in all ages of Christianity, and the sentiment of the Bible too, as I expect to make manifest. This, your contradiction against the church of God, and against his word, consists in your denying that baptism is the ordinance of introduction into the visible church of Christ, or is necessary to a visible standing in it.

Your note in pages 18 and 19, was probably considered by you, and will be by many of your readers, as containing a difficulty which I should not be able to get rid of handsomely. I will transcribe the passage in which the apparent and supposed difficulty is contained.

“Mr. Merrill (say you) tells us, page 51, that John baptized none but such as brought forth visible fruits of repentance. These persons he was making ready for the Lord; when prepared, they were to compose that kingdom, or the beginning of that kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. He adds, It appears to be this kingdom which was now at hand, almost ready to be set up, of which Christ spake to Nicodemus, when he said, John iii. 5. ‘Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ But this is to concede, either that John's baptism was not Christian baptism, but of an entirely different nature, or that baptism does not introduce into the king-

dom, as a line of separation, &c.; for after these multitudes were baptized, according to the representation of Mr. Merrill, they were only made ready for the kingdom, which had not yet even a being. Here, then, he gives up his darling doctrine."

As to this difficulty, in which you consider me now to be, let it be remarked,

1. That it puts me not to the least difficulty as to the principal point in debate, namely, That no person can be a member of Christ's visible church, till he be baptized; for these persons were confessedly of this description.

2. "It puts my darling doctrine," as you express it, not to the least hazard, any more than the peculiar circumstances of the first setting up of Christ's visible kingdom would, and must manifestly have done, on supposition that my darling doctrine were perfectly true, and so my sentiment correct. For, does not an examination by an authorized officer, and the enlisting of the examined person, constitute him a soldier? Yet the first person so enlisted cannot be said to belong to the army; nor can he belong to it till numbers more are enlisted, and the army organized. At the same time, these very things, his examination and enlisting would, after the army is constituted, be considered as the introductory and indispensable pre-requisites. The application is easy, and the conclusion this,—That I have no necessity of conceding to either of the things which you suppose; either that John's baptism is not Christian baptism, or that baptism does not introduce into the kingdom, as a line of separation.

3. Were it so that the quotations which you make would crowd me, even as closely as you suppose, still your own principles would stand in the most hazardous position, and must receive the first shock. For, say you, pages 12, 13, speaking of what initiates into the visible church, "It is that evidence, whatever it be, which is furnished by the subject, or by God himself, that a man is a saint." It is a given truth, Sir, that many of John's disciples furnished this evidence, when they were but in part made ready, that is, before they were baptized. Hence your principle brings you to this self contradictory conclusion, that persons are members of Christ's visible church, and at the same time are not made ready for him. For it was by preaching the baptism of repentance, and by baptizing the penitents, that John made ready a people prepared for the Lord. Here is, upon your own principles, a difficulty, which I know not

how to surmount or remove; whereas upon mine there is none, unless it be a little more explanation is wanted.

The penitents who were baptized of John, were made ready and prepared for the visible church; or they were the unorganized beginnings of it. As two, or as twenty, approved and enlisted soldiers, who are thus made ready and prepared for an army, which is about to be formed, are not the army, unless it be the unorganized beginnings of it; so, or in a similar situation, are John's first disciples, if not the whole of them, considered to have been.

In your second Letter you ask me perhaps a dozen questions, and state a particular case. I have been, and am still, rather at uncertainty, whether you proposed them seriously or not.

If you be serious in the inquiries,—“What do we consider the characters of our candidates for baptism to be?—What should we think of a person who proposed to be baptized, and afterwards should, from principle or from an erroneous conscience, refuse?—Whom do we consider to be members of the visible church, &c.?” Our answer is,—1. We consider our candidates for baptism to be visible saints. 2. A person who has agreed to be baptized, and should afterwards, merely from error of judgment, refuse to be, would still be considered a visible saint; but, at the same time, we should believe him to be for the present not fit for the kingdom of heaven, for he, having put his hand to the plough, looked back. 3. All visible saints, who have been baptized, we esteem to be members of Christ's visible church, and none else.

These answers, Sir, being carefully attended to, will solve all other questions upon the subject.

Wishing you light to see the truth, and grace to practise it,

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

REVEREND SIR,

THE business now on hand is, to review your examination of my definitions and arguments, which relate to what is Christian baptism.

On supposition that your examination has been candid, critical, and impartial, you have nothing to fear from its

being carefully reviewed. If your examination of my definitions and arguments should be found to be neither candid, critical, nor impartial, the public will in the issue discover where the fault lies, and attach blame where it belongs.

The present point in debate you define well, pages 19, 20. Say you, "The debate is confined to a single point: it is this,—Whether a complete immersion of the body in water, so that it shall be buried or overwhelmed in water, be the only Christian baptism?" This is the thing which you deny, but it is what I consider to be already fairly gained, and from which I expect to remove all your objections, which have any plausibility against it.

Permit me to make an observation or two, and then I shall proceed to the business before us. The first observation is, "It seems (say you) very extraordinary that immersion, as the only Christian baptism, should be so clearly and unambiguously taught, as much or more so than any Christian duty; alms-giving, for instance, about which there never was any dispute; and yet yourself, and such a multitude of pious, learned, and respectable ministers, and the purest and most enlightened part of the Christian church, since the reformation, should so long remain unconvinced and unreclaimed."

Was there never any dispute about alms-giving? If not, whence, I pray you, arises the large quantity of warm conversation which there has sometimes been in the world about alms-giving, for the poor, and other charitable uses? Some are complained of for their covetousness, when alms are requested; some for their too great liberality: some will be offended because alms are requested: some affirm that giving money or goods to such or such a person, is alms-giving; others will deny that it is: some will contend, that to give property for this purpose or for that purpose, is alms-giving; others are confident that it is no deed of charity to part with one's money to promote such purposes: others still may be found, who will not allow that any Christian duty of alms-giving is performed, unless a Christian temper be exercised in the performance. Perhaps there is scarce a religious duty, except baptism, about which there has been more dispute, among Papists and Protestants, and among Baptists and Pædobaptists, than the duty of alms-giving. It seems extraordinary that you should not have known this; and had you known it, you could not have mentioned the duty of alms-giving, with the least reasonable expectation, that by it you should be able to refute my idea of the clearness and

explicitness of the duty of Christian baptism by immersion. Perhaps you may reply, "I meant, there was never any dispute about there being such a Christian duty as alms-giving." Should this be granted as a general truth, it is equally true that there has been as little dispute about the existence of such a Christian duty as baptism. It may be well to remark, that it never has been denied in any age, by any denomination of Christians, but immersion is Christian baptism, when it has been administered by a proper person, and to a suitable subject. Just the same is true with respect to alms-giving, *mutatis mutandis*.

As to the "multitude of pious, learned, and very respectable ministers, and the purest and most enlightened part of the Christian church, since the reformation, remaining so long unconvinced and unreclaimed," I beg leave to refer you to my Letters on open communion with all who keep the ordinances as Christ delivered them to the saints.

The other observation which I have to make, relates to a passage in your 22d page: it is this,—“If the terms which are used by Christ and his apostles, when referring to this ordinance, have one uniform, unambiguous meaning, which determines baptism to be immersion, and the concurrent language and facts of scripture coincide with and support this meaning, the point is settled. We are not left to act at discretion. To make this evident, is the object which you set yourself to accomplish.”

Very well, Sir, and it is the object which I am now writing to accomplish, and if the Lord will, I shall instrumentally make some progress towards its accomplishment.

Now, Sir, for a review of your examination, pages 22, 23. Your professedly critical examination is thus introduced: “You begin (say you to me) by what you call defining the terms, and by detailing to us all the passages in the New Testament which speak on the subject of baptism. Your first word is *baptisterion*, the signification of which is, a font, a bath, a washing place, a vessel to wash the body in. Very well,” say you. Just below you add, “If it (i. e. *baptisterion*) were in an hundred places in the New Testament, it would furnish no evidence in proof of your proposition.” *Ans.* Let us, Sir, for one moment, turn the tables, and suppose that *baptisterion* favours *sprinkling*, as it now favours immersion, and that the definition of it were, a basin, a porringer, a sprinkling place, a vessel to sprinkle the face from; would here be no circumstantial evidence in favour of sprinkling? Would not this single word, on supposition that it favoured

your practice as it does ours, be more evidence for you than you are now able to collect from all writings, either human or divine? Yet it furnishes, say you, no (circumstantial) evidence for us. I mentioned it as a mere circumstance in our favour; the reader will judge whether it be so. My next words defined were *baptisma* and *baptismos*, the English of which is baptism, washing, sacred ceremonial washing. Here, Sir, you separated, in the last part of my definition, what I wish to have understood as being joined together. The three last words are exegetical or explanatory of the first, and shew the kind of washing which I intend. I know not how you could so mistake my meaning, as to suppose that I intended common washing. If the definition itself were so expressed that it was possible to mistake my meaning, yet what was said afterwards, in many places, show that I could have no such intention as you intimate; indeed, it could not but have been obvious that my meaning was not common washing: for the fact is, as I endeavoured to show, and hope most plainly to show, that the Greek words for baptism and to baptize have no such meaning in the Bible as common washing. I find no place in your Letters where you show that they have; and I expect to show that they have not.

You ask, "But is there no sacred ceremonial washing besides immersion?" *Ans.* No, not where *baptisma*, *baptismos* or *baptizō* is in the original.

Your observation upon *baptistis*, my third word defined, is, "You know that this word simply means a baptizer." But, Sir, the question is, What is a baptizer? I explained or defined it, one who dips, a Baptist; I now add, it is, strictly speaking, a Baptist minister, or one who administers the ordinance of baptism, or one who immerses. Why did you omit my definition? was it because you saw no plausible refutation?

In the next place, I defined *baptizō* to mean, when rendered into English, to baptize, to dip all over, to wash.

To baptize is, indeed, a Greek word, supplied with an English termination.

Upon my definition you make the following remark: "The first and the last of these definitions, it appears to me, you might as well have omitted." No, Sir, I might not as well have omitted either, or especially the last; for then you might justly have complained, but now complaint is aside, for I gave my definitions full; I did it purposely: I gave you all to which you could make any honourable pre-

tenfions, fo that when thefe were fhown to fpeak nothing for your praftice, but wholly for ours, you might put in no farther claim; but as you have, your claim muft be examined.

“Your definitions of the word *louō*, to wafh, to rinf, to bathe, (fay you to me) feem as little to contribute to fupport your hypothefis, becaufe it is indifputable that we often wafh, rinf, and bathe, without immerfing totally under water the thing or body wafhed, rinfed, or bathed.” But do we ever wafh, rinf, or bathe by *fprinkling*?

I have no where told the public that *louō* always implied immerfion, nor did I ever intend to communicate fuch an idea. It was and is ftill quite fufficient for my purpofe, to find that *louō* is never ufed in the Bible, or in the New Teftament, to mean any thing fhort of bathing a body or thing all over.

“But now,” fay you, page 25, “for your proof of the fpecific, uniform, unambiguous meaning of the word *baptizō*, as fignifying total immerfion. You fay, page 37, ‘the plain, literal meaning and common fignification of the word is to immerfe, overwhelm, dip, or plunge all over; and that there appears to be no evidence that it is ever ufed fo much as once, in any part of the Bible, to fignify the application of water in any other fenfe.’ But this is not proof, my dear Sir, it is your affertion. I am constrained to deny the correctnefs of it.” *Ans.* Then, Sir, we may expect to find that in your Letters the matter ftands corrected. We will proceed in the review.

In the 26th page of your Letters, the public is informed, that the “ftrikt truth, however, is, that it (*baptizō*) does not fignify any manner of applying water, but only the application of it in general.” I confefs, Sir, that this affertion, coming from a man of your fenfe, education, and veracity, is a little to be wondered at. But if this affertion be fupportable, we may undoubtedly expect to find it proved in fome of your Letters; that *baptizō* is ufed in fome one inftance in which it fhall manifeftly mean fome application of water which does not and cannot imply immerfion. We hope to examine carefully.

Your next words are fufficiently noticeable: they are thefe,—“As your initial proof is thus found to confift in mere affertion, I had thought of leaving it, as fufficiently refuted by a contrary affertion.” This, Sir, brings to my mind what Ahab faid to Benhadad, ‘Let not him that girdeth on the harnefs boast himfelf as he that putteth it off.’

The next business which you undertake, is to make, in my judgment, an unnatural and a somewhat dangerous addition to every text of Scripture in which the word *baptizō* is used. To each you add, *by affusion*. This business, which fills your pages from the 27th to the 33d, I shall leave to the reflection of your readers, and turn my attention to your own observations on what you had done. It is pleasing, my dear Sir, that you do not appear fully satisfied with what you have done: I desire that you may be less and less satisfied, till you shall be altogether dissatisfied.

You conclude that the connexion in which the word *baptizō* is used, does not preclude the possibility of baptism being administered by affusion. You do not intimate in your premises, from which you draw your conclusion, that there is a *probability* that the ordinance was ever administered by affusion, but that there is a *possibility*. Hence you conclude, "that if this be admitted as a *possible* thing, it is evident that my assertion, respecting the uniform, exclusive meaning of the word, as signifying immersion, and that only, is entirely without foundation."

Here, Sir, either your judgment or mine is incorrect: for in my judgment, I may admit your premises, without fearing the conclusion. I would rest the whole cause, or had I liberty, I might safely do it, upon this single point, that it should be forsaken, *if your premises, upon their being true, would harm it*. Your premises are,—first, that there is a *possibility, from the connexion* in which *baptizō* is used, that baptism was administered by affusion; secondly, that there is no *probability, from the connexion* in which *baptizō* is used, that it was ever administered in that way.

Now, Sir, can you have a single query in your mind, whether a gospel ordinance, which hath nothing for its authority but positive precepts, may not be duly administered, according to the precepts and pattern given, when it is, at the same time, administered in a manner which cannot be supported, even by a probability arising from so much as one text out of fifty, which contain precepts or examples relative to the positive ordinance enjoined? In all such moral cases, where, from the connexion of any positive law or ordinance, there may be a possibility of any certain thing being enjoined, yet if there be no probability of it, it amounts to a moral demonstration, that no such duty was or is enjoined, unless we would reflect the highest reproach upon the Lawgiver.

All which I need to establish the point, with all who suitably honour the Scriptures and the Christian Lawgiver, is, to prove that the literal, the plain, the common sense of the Scripture is, that to be buried or overwhelmed in water is the only Christian baptism. Ten thousand possibilities for any thing else, arising from the connexion of any text in which the word *baptizō* is used, would not alter the matter an hair's breadth.

Besides, Sir, you confess that in some instances there appears an *harshness* in the supply, by affusion, arising from the connexion: and you do not presume to say that it is easy and natural in any, save in those passages which refer to the baptism of the Holy Ghost; of which say you, *water baptism is undoubtedly a symbol*. Hence, if I prove from your own concessions, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost means immersion or overwhelming, you will yield the point in controversy, or renew it under increased disadvantages.

Now, Sir, to the *point*. What is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, judging from your own concessions, as well as from the word of God? Your Letters to me shall give the answer.

Speaking of Rom. vi. 4. you say, page 45, "The spiritual, internal baptism of the Holy Ghost, exactly coincides with the whole of his (the apostle's) representation, and invariably produces the effects he mentions."

In page 48, speaking of Col. ii. 12. your words are, "It is just like the other," i. e. it is just like the above passage, Rom. vi. 4.

In the passage which we have been just considering, pages 33, 34, you tell us, "Water baptism is undoubtedly a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is a figurative baptism;" pages 60, 61.

In page 60 you have these words,—"There must be some *evident likenesses* between the subject to which a word is applied, in the natural and primitive use of it, and the subject to which it is applied as a figure; otherwise there is a *gross impropriety* in the figurative use of it."

Now, Sir, permit me to put these ideas, concessions, and declarations of yours together.

1. To be *buried* with Christ in baptism, to be planted in the *likeness* of his death, to be *buried* with him by baptism, and to be risen with him in baptism, Rom. vi. 4, 5. and Col. ii. 12. is to be baptized with the Holy Ghost; or the "baptism of the Holy Ghost exactly coincides with this representation."

2. "There is an *evident* likeness between the natural idea of *planting, burying, and rising* as from the dead, and the figurative baptism of the Holy Ghost, or there is a *gross impropriety* (as you say) in the apostle's figurative use of the words."

3. Water baptism is a symbol or figure of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; it is, therefore, a burying, a planting, or immersion,—your Letters, as well as the word of God, being judge.

Hence, Sir, by going a large distance round, to avoid what you feared, you have proved, to my hand, what I endeavoured to establish through the course of five sermons.

Though I approve of the conclusion to which you have brought me, yet I cannot say that I consent to all your premises. You appear to me to be incorrect, in setting down the passages in Rom. vi. 4, 5. and Col. ii. 12. as containing instances of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Should you ever in the world be a thorough Baptist, or if not, when the light of heaven shall give you light, you will, if I mistake not, see very clearly water baptism pointed out in both these chapters.

If you can honestly get by the above argument, and still retain your ground, I wish you to: but should the argument be found impassable, then cheerfully concede that truth is stronger than man, and yield to her sovereign mandate. He who is willingly conquered by truth, is a conqueror himself.

I am sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER V.

REVEREND SIR,

IN your fourth Letter you manifestly discovered a dislike to my assertions and arguments. In this I propose to give my readers some short notices of what I did, both as to argument and assertion; and also set to view how you attempted to wind yourself out, and how, by the attempt, you have wound yourself up in them.

My first argument, to prove that the Greek word *baptizō* means to immerse, bury, &c. was—The most learned critics in the Greek and English languages, bear their united testimony, generally speaking, against your practice, against their

own, and for the Baptists, that the common, the plain, the literal sense of the word is as I had given it. Your reply is, "To have recourse to such miserable authorities, to determine relative to an essential and exclusive article of Christian doctrine, is not the most respectful treatment of the great Inspirer of the Bible." The only end which I had to answer, by quoting the definitions and critical remarks of critical and learned men, was to ascertain the definition of a word. Do you suppose, Sir, that I and the rest of your readers, were all of us born with innate notions, answering to all the ideas meant to be communicated by all the Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Greek words in the Bible? If this be not your belief, then you know that you and I, and our readers too, must gain some of our first knowledge from critics, or from compilers of dictionaries, lexicons, and other writings of men, &c. When we have gained what knowledge is at hand, as to the meaning of any word, and our consequent duty, as related by the best of men; yet if there be any more sure word of prophecy, we should, as did the Bereans, take heed to it. Accordingly I did in the second place turn to the word of the Lord, in which I found it thus written, Mark i. 5. 'And there went out unto him (John) all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan.' Thus, Sir, by comparing the testimony of learned men and the sure word of prophecy together, I find they both agree, and therefore believe both.

But, Sir, what shall I say to your reply? Shall I tell the learned world that Mr. S. Austin, who would not allow me to conjoin the testimony of learned critics with that of the word of God, in order to make sure the definition of a word which he is disposed to controvert, dares himself to confront plain Scripture with many great but nameless critics? Shall I tell it in Askelon, or publish it in Gath, that the same Mr. Austin, who will not allow a dictionary, lexicon, or concordance, each sanctioned by the learned world, to say one word; dare spoil the plain, literal, common, and only sense of a plain passage of Scripture, when all the authority which he pretends to possess is, that it is the opinion of many great critics, that John actually did baptize in the river of Jordan by *affusion*? Shall I tell the same learned world, that the same Mr. Austin asserts, in his public Letters to me, page 35, "That the supposed evidence of this passage must lie wholly in the preposition *in*, and that applies to John as really as to the subjects of his administration?" "Nay, (says Mr. Austin)

it especially relates to *him*; the consequence is obvious,—it is, that John was immersed at every administration of the ordinance.” A person who can assert thus roundly, without so much as a show of evidence, and call it arguing, may be expected to find some fault with the assertions and pretended arguings of his opponents. But, Sir, I have a little more to say of this argument of yours, by which you would destroy my evidence from Scripture. You say, “This consequence is too unpleasant to be easily received.” What consequence? The one which you had just drawn, “That John was himself immersed at every administration of the ordinance.” This consequence you draw from your own premise, “that the preposition *IN* relates especially to John,” together with my definition of *baptizō*, that it is to immerse. Now take your own premise and your own definition, if you have any, or take your assertion, that *baptizō* is a generic term, and means not any particular kind of washing, but washing in general, or any application of water: and what is the consequence? “The consequence may be unpleasant, and too unpleasant to be easily received:” but as unpleasant as it may be, I shall set it down, and the world will judge on which side the unpleasantness falls. The consequence is—If John baptized by affusion every time he administered the ordinance, he affused or poured water on himself: if he baptized by sprinkling, then at every administration he was sprinkled himself: if he used water in any other way, in the administration of the ordinance, in the same way the water came on himself. Thus, Sir, your own argument makes nonsense of John’s baptism, take it in any way which you please. Either John’s baptism must be given up in whole, or your method of managing it.

In page 36, you are pleased to express yourself thus: “You next, for lack of proof, go on to repeat your assertions.” And how do you know “*it was for lack of proof?*” Is it always the case with you, when in your sermons you recapitulate some particulars which you had passed over, that you do it for *lack of proof?* If not, your accusation against me may not be well founded. A little afterwards, speaking of my recapitulation, you subjoin, “My dear Sir, repetitions and assertions are not arguments. We ask of you proof.” Proof, Sir, you may expect; proof of two kinds: proof that your examination of my Sermons was not well founded, and proof that no similar opposition will be able to injure the leading sentiments which they contain.

My third argument was to this purport: *Baptizō* and *baptismos*, though they be most usually rendered to baptize and baptism, yet they sometimes signify to wash; but when this is their signification, the washing spoken of is never common washing, but ceremonial; which is bathing the thing in water, or putting it all over in water. Upon this you see fit to observe, in not a very handsome manner, thus, "But how you could stumble upon this, as an argument, is incomprehensible."

My readers, Sir, can generally understand me. As to this argument, which you say is incomprehensible, I will set it before you with mathematical plainness. *Baptizō* and *baptismos* equal two translations, baptizing and a certain kind of washing; this certain kind of washing equals ceremonial washing, which is to bathe a thing all over in water, or to put into water, Lev. xi. 32.; to bathe a thing all over in water, or to put into water, equals immersion: therefore, to baptize equals to immerse, and immersion equals baptism. But, Sir, your answer is ready, and it is this,—"*Baptizō* equals *niptō*, and *niptō* equals common washing." Now, Sir, show me in any passage of the New Testament, where this short chain of yours, of only three links, is supported, or can be by plain affirmation or fair deduction, and I will confess that I have run my claim too high. It is easy to show you where you will go for proof, and it is equally easy to show you that it is not in point. You will directly repair to Mark vii. or to Luke xi. Very well. What do you find here? In Mark you find, that the Pharisees, except they wash they eat not; this was a constant ceremony among them, and *niptō* is used. And when they come from the MARKET, except they wash (baptize, or bathe themselves all over in water) they eat not. This is their extraordinary ceremony or tradition. This was to be observed when they had been to the market, or to a promiscuous assembly, where clean and unclean persons were assembled. This takes up the passages in Luke xi. as well as Mark vii. Now, Sir, you, and those who have written before you on your indefensible ground, would palm it upon both learned and unlearned, upon both saint and sinner, that the circumstances are so similar, in which *niptō* and in which *baptizō* are used, that the words are equivalent, when the very texts themselves intimate to you that it is no such thing. One half of your supposed strength, and imaginary triumph, is founded upon your mistaking, or willingly not understanding, the above passages. Would you bring us half so much evi-

dence for you, as there is in these two passages against you, we would allow you something plausible. But, Sir, till you show us where *baptizō* and *niptō* are equivalent, we wish you would say less about it, and take less credit for the supposed equivalency of them. Equate them, or make them equal, if you can: when you do it, we will be silent, or make concessions: till you do this, common civility imposes silence on you. The other half of your supposed strength, I hope to remove out of your way as I come to it.

The next thing which requires to be noticed, in your examination, is my definition of the word *louō*, and your observations relating to my definition. My definition of *louō* was, and still is, to bathe or wash a thing all over. You add to my words, and say "that I intend immersion." I do not; nor did I ever intend to define *louō* as always meaning immersion. All which I have said is this, that *louō* always imports a washing of the thing or subject all over. You subjoin, "If I will turn to John xiii. 10. I shall find evidence directly and conclusively against this idea." Against what idea? Against immersion. This idea of immersion, as being the exclusive sense of *louō*, I never advocated. But we will take the text into consideration: it is this,—'Jesus saith to him, He that is washed (*ὁ λελουμένος*) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' Here you say, "the man is washed, when only his feet are washed." Do you mean to contradict the text? or, Do you mean that the text, by a figure of speech, which puts a part for the whole, says the man is washed, when it intends the feet only are washed? The text does not appear to be perfectly easy to be understood; its purport appears to be, either *first*, That Peter had already been baptized, (*λελουμένος*) and so now had no need to have his body, as Paul expresses it, washed with pure water; but it was sufficient for the object that the Saviour had at this time in view, that his feet be washed,—as that would be sufficient to manifest the Saviour's condescension, and to teach his followers humility: or, *secondly*, The meaning might be, that *λελουμένος* referred, by a figure, to the washing of the man, when it intended the washing of the feet only. But upon either supposition, it comes to the same thing, as to my argument from it, unless you can show that the feet were but partially washed. For all which I say or wish to maintain is, that whenever *louō* is used to import the washing of any thing whatever, it intends that the thing is washed all over. Should you upon this concession say, and I grant it in this instance, and in

many more, that *louō* and *niptō* are equivalent; would it either help you or harm me; would it be to your purpose at all? If you consider it to be so, I will grant it; for I purpose to allow you every inch of ground to which you can apparently make any just claim.

We must now compare things accurately.

Baptizō is equal to immersion, and to nothing short of it. *Louō* is sometimes equal to *baptizō*; then *louō* is sometimes equal to immersion, as when Paul says, our bodies (*teloumenoi*) washed with pure water. *Louō* is sometimes equal to *niptō*; *niptō* is equal to the washing of part of the human body; therefore, and what? This, Sir,—first, that *niptō* and *louō* may have the same import; and secondly, that when *niptō* and *louō* agree, they neither of them agree with *baptizō*; therefore, and what? This, Sir,—that your argument comes to just what it should, to nothing.

Would you obtain the least advantage from the signification of the word *louō*, you must prove one of these two things,—either 1. That *louō* never intends immersion, and yet is sometimes equivalent to *baptizō*; or 2. That *louō*, in some certain place or places, where it is substituted for *baptizō*, signifies not immersion, but something short of it. But could you do this, which you neither have done nor can do, still nothing would be gained, unless it be this, that it would embarrass my principle, without helping your own; for neither *baptizō*, *louō*, nor *niptō*, is ever used for *rantizō* or for *sprinkling*.

You proceed, Sir, in your examination, to tell us, “That it is not probable that the dead body of Dorcas was immersed; that it would have been a bad way to have immersed Paul and Silas, in order to bathe their stripes; and you can hardly persuade yourself, that the custom, in those days, of washing the sow from her filth, was to immerse those animals.”

All this trouble, Sir, you have, either through my fault, in expressing myself without sufficient perspicuity, or through yours, in adding to my words; for I never intended any such thing. What I wished for is just this,—To show that *louō* never meant any thing less than the washing of the body or thing all over. The world must judge, and we shall both one day, whether you have deduced a single circumstance to invalidate the idea which I advanced; if you have not, my Sermons yet appear uninjured by your examination.

One passage which I passed over, in page 39, I will here mention, lest you should imagine that I wish to avoid it, on

account of some apparent difficulty. You express it thus: "If you will turn to Rev. i. 5: you will find another example, clearly against what you assert, respecting *louō*. The word is *lcloufanti*. You will not pretend that Christ ever washed his people in his own blood by immersing them in it; this is a natural impossibility: the word here I grant is used figuratively." Very well, Sir, and are they not cleansed thoroughly? If so, they are figuratively washed all over. This is all that I ask you to grant.

Your other observations, in your fourth Letter, are supposed to be answered, and so sufficiently reviewed by what is already said.

I will now state the business, so far as it appears to stand for the present unembarrassed by your examination. *Bapizō* is to immerse, bury, overwhelm, &c.; *louō* never means any thing less than to wash a thing all over. The Holy Spirit hath made use of both these words, and of these only, with their derivatives, except in John iii. 5. to designate baptism: hence, baptism can mean nothing less than washing the body all over, or immersing it, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is no denomination in the world who practises this baptism, but those who are Baptists as to the administration of the ordinance: hence those and those only who baptize by immersion, administer the Christian ordinance of baptism.

Wishing you more light, love, and knowledge than the writer possesses,

I remain yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

REVEREND SIR,

IT is manifestly a matter of importance with you, that the world should consider Paul, where he speaks of baptism, Rom. vi. and Col. ii. 12. to intend the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is, indeed, to your theory of baptism, a matter of the greatest magnitude, to have these passages refer to the baptism of the Holy Ghost; for if they do not, they are as a great mill-stone, bound about the neck of all your arguments, and drown them all as in the sea. So long as you can persuade the prejudiced and inattentive to disbelieve the plain import of the apostle's words and reason-

ings, so long you may prevent their feeling the force of these passages! But what will the world think of your reasonings, and the blindness which they gather from them, provided it be here shown, as it indeed hath already been, that though we grant all your premises, the conclusion from them is fairly and undeniably this,—that immersion is the only gospel baptism. All your objection against allowing that the apostle, in Romans and Colossians, alludes to and intends water baptism, is considered to arise from an apprehension that immersion would certainly follow. But we will attend to your premises.

In pages 33, 34, your words are, Water baptism is undoubtedly a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Pages 44, 45, you inform us that these passages, To be buried with Christ by baptism into death, to be buried with Christ in baptism, and to be raised with him in baptism, according to Rom. vi. 4. and Col. ii. 12. can never be proved to have any respect or even allusion to external water baptism.

Again you tell us, page 60, “There must be some evident likeness, between the subject to which a word is applied in the natural and primitive use of it, and the subject to which it is applied as a figure, otherwise there is a gross impropriety in the figurative use of it.”

Hence, Sir, baptism is spoken of under the similitude or figure of burying and rising again. You reply, This is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Grant it: yet you tell us, Water baptism is undoubtedly a symbol (i. e. an emblem or figure) of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. You may add, There is no likeness between the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and burying and rising again. But, Sir, you have declared to us, that “there must be some *evident likeness* between a subject to which a word is applied in the natural and primitive use of it, and the subject to which it is applied as a figure, otherwise there is a gross impropriety in the figurative use of it.”

Now, Sir, I see but two things between which you must choose; either, 1. That water baptism hath an evident likeness to a burial and resurrection; or, 2. That the apostle was guilty of a gross impropriety in the figurative use which he made of the words burying and the resurrection. Take which you please.

You will please to review your assertion, page 47, “That the above texts in Romans and Colossians, do not even furnish the shadow of proof for baptism by immersion.”

In the close of your fifth Letter you set down these memorable words: "All your potent reasoning here, in a few words, is this—The word *baptizō* means to immerse, therefore the apostles, because they were commanded to baptize, practised immersion, and their practice of immersion in baptizing proves that *baptizō* means to immerse. Whether this be arguing in a circle, or arguing at all, I entreat you to consider, take advice, and speak your mind."

Sir, I have considered, and find that you have given a partial statement of my poor arguing, if I argued at all. I have taken advice of that part of my third Sermon which you are professedly examining. Now, Sir, I will speak my mind. It is, *first*, That your critical readers will doubt the correctness of your concluding assertion, (which is quoted above,) judging from the quotations which you have made from my Sermons, pages 36, 37, 38, 39. *Secondly*, My mind is, that an argument is good, though of a circular form, provided every part contains its own proper evidence. My mind is, *thirdly*, That it is a good rule, to put in the middle of our arguing those particulars on which we place the least dependence, and that in the beginning and close of any and every arguing of weight, our particulars should be able to sustain the shock of our opponent's opposition. My mind is, *fourthly*, That you have told the world that all my potent reasoning rests upon those particulars in which I never placed much confidence; whereas, were I to tell them where the strength of the reasoning lays, my information would be, that it lays, *first*, in the determinate meaning of the apostle's word, by which he expresses the thing done in the ordinance of baptism, without using the more common word *baptizō*, as Heb. x. 22. 'Having our bodies (*leloumenoi*) washed with pure water, &c.' Lastly, that the strength of my reasoning lay in the similitudes which Paul uses, when he would illustrate what is done to the persons baptized, or what takes place in baptism; that the subjects are buried and raised again in baptism: this I considered sufficient to make manifest the practice of the apostles. My mind is, *fifthly*, That the above reasons may excuse the circular appearance of my argumentation; or if they will not, these reasons are sufficient of themselves to establish what I wished, aside from the two middle particulars, which excited your observations. My mind is, *sixthly*, That were your Letters, arguments, and their author used in a similar manner, you would complain of unfairness. My mind is, *lastly*, To leave it with our readers, to form what judgment they please upon the

conclusiveness or weakness of our arguments, and with respect to the truths which we advocate or oppose.

Your sixth Letter comes next, that it may pass in review: in which you bring forward what you term unequivocal and indisputable evidence. If it be unequivocal and indisputable, you need have no apprehensions with relation to it, while it may pass a candid review.

Page 52, say you, "It will not be denied that the word *niptō*, which is sometimes used as equivalent with *baptizō*, generally means a partial washing. I have produced two or three examples, in which it is indisputable that the word *louō* is used in the like partial sense, and in not one is it clear that it is used to signify total immersion. I will now add unequivocal evidence, to prove the direct contrary of your assertion, that the words *baptizō* and *baptismos* have not always the extensive sense of immersion, but sometimes, at least, intend the application of water in a partial manner."

I. "In Luke xi. 38. it is too plain to admit of any controversy, that *baptizō* is used in a sense different from that of a total immersion in water of the subject to which it is applied:—'And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.'"

Ans. Sir, your not knowing the traditionary laws of the Pharisees, and your inattention to the connexion and plain import of this passage in Luke, and in that of Mark vii. is the only excuse which can be made for you, whilst you very incautiously, and with great boldness, most roundly contradict the plain word of the Lord, in what you say on these passages, from page 52 to 57.

The laws traditionary among the Pharisees were, among others, these two: 1. "They eat not bread, or any common meal, at any common time, except they wash their hands;" 2. "When they come from the *market*, or from a crowded assembly of clean and unclean persons, they baptize themselves, or were baptized;" that is, they immersed or bathed themselves all over in water. This second law carries its own traditionary evidence with it, so that it is at once obvious, upon our understanding the reason of the first. The reason of the first, or of their washing their hands, was, lest they had touched some unclean thing, and so their hands might have contracted some defilement. Now, the reason of their immersing or baptizing themselves, when they came from the *market*, or from the midst of a *promiscuous multitude*, is manifest; for in such places, and in such company, they could not tell on what part their defilement might be; they

must, therefore, ceremonially cleanse themselves, or be ceremonially cleansed, all over: they must make the outside clean, according to their traditionary law.

This, Sir, exactly agrees with what is related of this matter by both Mark and Luke.

As you have first taken the passage in Luke, so I will mention the circumstances of that first. The passage is, 'When the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (or was not first immersed) before dinner.' The noticeable circumstances are two: 1. Jesus had come from a promiscuous assembly, where the people were *gathered thick together*, verse 29. 2. The reproof which our Lord gave the Pharisees, 'Now do ye Pharisees make *clean* the *outside* of the *cup* and *platter*,' plainly referring to the traditionary washing, immersing, or baptizing their bodies, when they had been *publicly* exposed to contract, as they supposed, some outward defilement.

As to the passage in Mark vii. the matter appears, if possible, still more explicit. In the second verse, the Pharisees found fault, because Christ's disciples ate bread with unwashen hands: in the third, we are told that the Pharisees ate not, unless they washed their hands with exactness, or rubbing them: and in the fourth verse, we have an account of their carrying their superstition still farther; for when they came from the *market*, they ate not except they baptized themselves, or washed, or bathed all over. This, Sir, makes the Scripture all easy and natural. But this plain, fair, and natural exposition of Scripture very illy suits you, unscriptural and unchristian, or antichristian, practice of *rantizing* for *baptizing*, or sprinkling, or partial washing, for the gospel ordinance of immersion.

You produce not one text of Scripture to prove your assertions, or any other authority, save Grotius, "who (you say) is the most respectable writer that ever appeared on our side of the question;" and he admits your exposition; but, Sir, I do not, nor does the word of God admit it. Nor have you, nor can you find so much as a single passage in the word of God, where *baptizō* and *niptō* are used, but the attending circumstances will show that they mean different things, or a different application of the same thing.

In page 55, speaking of Luke xi. 38. you say, "This passage has been often mentioned by Pædobaptist writers, but somehow the proper light in which it presents itself is strangely overlooked by you and your brethren." The proper

light, Sir, we consider to be Scripture light; this we believe God hath shown us: by this light we discover your misapplication of the passage. You subjoin, "That Mr. Cleveland made use of it, we have your authority, under the following quotation from him,—“Your learned men know that the word *baptizō*, Luke xi. 38. and *baptismos*, Mark vii. 5. are used to signify the same as *nipō* is; that is, proper washing, or making clean by the application of water, in cases that do not necessarily require dipping, as the mode of washing.” You answer by flatly contradicting the good man’s assertion: nay, you go farther, and say, that the learned men, in no other class, know any such thing.” You, Sir, are pleased to add, “They certainly do know it, as far as the Bible furnishes them with information.” *Reply.* True, but the Bible furnishes them with no such information. You still subjoin, “I am sorry, my dear Sir, that you have not given us a better specimen of your modesty.” False modesty aside, Sir, when you or your brethren would, by wresting the Scriptures, force from us and from the world the precious ordinance of baptism, and even the knowledge of it.

We now proceed to what you set down as undeniable evidence. Your words are, page 57, “Another case in which the word *baptizō* is undeniably used to convey an idea entirely different from that of complete immersion, occurs 1 Cor. x. 2. ‘And were all baptized (*ebaptisanto*) unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’”

Here let Paul explain himself, or let the preceding verse explain what this means. The preceding verse is, ‘Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were *under* the cloud, and all passed *through* the sea:’ then follows, verse 2, ‘And were all baptized unto Moses *in* the cloud and *in* the sea.’ How does this “undeniably convey an idea entirely different from that of complete immersion?” It looks to me somewhat like the same idea. It certainly has the appearance of being overwhelmed, or completely encompassed. They were all *under* the cloud, they all passed *through* the sea; they were baptized *in* the cloud and *in* the sea. This your undeniable evidence against the idea of immersion, appears, upon the very face of it, to favour, strongly to favour, the very truth which you brought it to destroy. Thus, Sir, your unequivocal evidence, and your undeniable evidence, and all your evidence, which you bring against immersion, as the only gospel baptism, turn out like Balaam, whom Balak hired to curse Israel,—*they bless it altogether.*

The next witness which you produce will not be particularly noticed, for you confess, saying, "I do not contend that it is conclusive." But, say you, "The passage in Heb. ix. 10. it appears to me, is conclusive." It shall, then, be specially noticed. "It determines (say you) that *baptizō*, and *baptizmos* its derivative to be generic terms, comprehending several ways of applying water, without specifically designating either—'Which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, (*ἀιὰ φηροῖς βαπτισμοῖς*) &c.' These baptisms were undoubtedly all those applications of fluids which were prescribed in the Mosaic law."

Had you read your text three words further, and taken suitable notice of them, they would have spoiled your conclusion. You will permit me to read the text, with the three additional words: it is thus,—'Which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and *carnal ordinances*.' Now, Sir, the conclusion is, "These baptisms were undoubtedly not all those applications of fluids which were prescribed in the Mosaic law; for carnal ordinances comprise the ordinances of God concerning bloody sacrifices. These ordinances comprise the sprinkling of blood, and the ashes of an heifer, &c. Hence, Sir, your conclusion is defective, and so spoiled.

Our next inquiry shall be, What are the washings in the ceremonial law? Then we shall inquire whether these washings, compared with the text, do not spoil your conclusion from it? Your conclusion is, That divers washings include sprinkling, as the sprinkling of blood, and the ashes of an heifer, &c.

The ceremonial washings, mentioned in the law, appear to be at most but of seven kinds, and some of these have but slight shades of difference. These kinds are, as I shall mention them,—

1. 'It shall be rinsed *in water*,' Lev. vi. 28. This obviously implies immersion.

2. 'Aaron and his sons shall wash their feet at the laver,' Exod. xxx. 18, 19. This might be performed by immersing their hands and their feet, and it might not.

3. 'It shall be *scoured in water*,' Lev. vi. 28. This supposes immersion.

4. 'He shall wash his clothes *in water*,' Lev. xiv. 9. This implies immersion.

5. 'He shall bathe himself *in water*, he shall wash all his flesh in water,' Lev. xv. 11, 16. This taken literally is immersion.

6. 'Aaron and his sons thou (Moses) shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water,' Exod. xxix. 4. This means, according to the probability, not immersion.

7. 'It must be put into water,' Lev. xi. 32. This is manifestly immersion.

We shall now inquire whether these washings, compared with the text, which saith divers washings, do not spoil your conclusion. Your conclusion is, that divers washings include sprinklings, all kinds of the sprinklings of fluids, as the sprinklings of blood, and of the ashes of an heifer, &c.

Here it is worthy of note, that in no place is washing called sprinkling, or sprinkling called washing. Is your conclusion spoiled? It is likewise worthy of your particular observation, that in the Mosaic law there are several species of ceremonial washings, which evidently imply immersion; such as rinsing, scouring in water, putting into water, and the like. Now, Sir, how do you know that Paul, or the Holy Ghost by him, included in (*diaphorais baptismois*) divers washings, any other kind of washing but those kinds which imply immersion? There appears no intimation, from the words used, from the connexion, or from common sense, that any washing which does not imply immersion was meant. If you do not know that any other kind of washing is intended, then you do not yet know but my sentiment as to the signification of *baptizō* is correct in every part, completely so.

But as this text is your last resort, I will just observe to you and the public, that even were your ideas of the text, and your conclusion too, as to its including sprinkling, all admitted, and fully granted, it would not put my general principle, that baptism by immersion is the only gospel baptism, to any danger; for were there a thousand species or kinds of baptism, there is, however, but one which is a gospel ordinance, as Paul assures us in his epistle to the Ephesians; and this *one* kind of *baptism* is the kind which, as Paul tells us in Romans and Colossians, and as you by consequence confess, has an evident likeness to burying and rising again. Baptism by immersion is the only baptism which hath this evident likeness. Hence, Sir, whether you will be judge yourself, or leave it with Paul, it comes, when we put matters together, to the same thing. Baptism by immersion is the only gospel baptism: hence, Sir, your sprinkling for baptism, or your partial washing for baptism, or your washing with rubbing for baptism, all turn out unscriptural and of man's invention.

Your position, Sir, is indeed a trying one to a benevolent mind. You believe sprinkling or partial washing to be baptism. You have laboured much to prove that there are more baptisms than one, hoping in this way to establish sprinkling for baptism, as a necessary consequence. Whereas, could you prove what you have not, and what we believe you never can, that there are baptisms which do not imply immersion, overwhelming, or the like, still it would afford no more evidence, that sprinkling or any partial washing is gospel baptism; than it proves that Moses' sprinkling the blood of slain beasts upon the people, or ashes into the air, is gospel baptism; for Christians have but *one gospel baptism*, Eph. iv. 5. and if you have more, they belong to another gospel, and are of Antichrist's invention.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

REVEREND SIR,

IN the beginning of your seventh Letter, "you request me to consider what conclusion we are naturally to draw from those places in which the word *baptizō* is used figuratively." This I have already done in a preceding Letter, and the conclusion which we found to flow naturally from it, was immersion; for you informed us, that Paul spake of this baptism, or described it by the figurative language, burying, planting, and rising. You also in this place inform us, "that there must be some evident likeness between the subject to which a word is applied in the natural primitive use of it, and the subject to which it is applied as a figure; otherwise there is a gross impropriety in the figurative use of it." The conclusion is hence perfectly natural, that when *baptizō* is used figuratively, it means a figurative immersion, that is, a figurative burying and resurrection, or immersion in some element or thing, aside from water.

I might have added no more here, on the baptism of the Holy Ghost, did I consider your observations sufficiently explicit and accurate: but as the matter is, more must be said.

Whilst speaking of the pouring out of the Spirit, as mentioned by the prophet Joel, ii. 28. you express your senti-

ment in the following manner: "This prophecy the apostle Peter expressly applies to the effusion of the Spirit on the disciples, on the memorable day of Pentecost, when they were filled with, not plunged in, the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. According to your strange treatment of this passage, which surely is (say you to me) more like rant than reasoning, the sound and the Spirit were the same thing, and the apostles were overwhelmed with, or immersed in, sound."

Ans. I said not that the apostles were plunged, overwhelmed, or immersed in sound: I said this,—that the house was filled with the sound, wind, or Spirit from heaven, and that the apostles were overwhelmed, for all the house where they were sitting was filled. I left it with you to determine with what the house was filled, whether with sound, wind, or Spirit: but as you have determined not according to my liking, that it was filled with sound, I must still add, and will do it as explicitly as I can.

The operation wrought on the morning of the memorable day of Pentecost, let it be what it may, was the baptizing of the disciples with the Holy Ghost, as Christ promised, Acts i. 5.

Quest. What was now done?

Ans. Three things were done.

1. There was a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, (this is what attended the pouring out of the Spirit from heaven,) and it filled all the house where they were sitting. What filled all the house? You may reply, Sound filled all the house; but is your reply warranted from the text, and circumstances attending? Is it not much more consistent with truth, and with the intent of the text, to say that all the house was filled with the remarkable presence and power of the Holy Ghost? To me, the latter is the important and just sense of the text.

2. Another thing done was, there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

3. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now, Sir, you will judge, or let common sense judge, what part, or whether every part of this operation comes in to make up what is called the baptism of the Holy Ghost. To me, it is a plain case that the disciples were encompassed or overwhelmed with the divine glory, or with the remarkable presence of the Holy Ghost, as well as filled with it; and that this was the baptism which was predicted and accomplished.

As to the text, 1 Cor. xii. 13. 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,' the import appears, from the connexion, to be this,—all Christians, though of very different gifts and graces, are all bound and inclosed by one Spirit, in one mystical body.

Your collateral arguments must now pass a short review.

Neither you nor my readers would be troubled with any attention to these, but I wish to meet and remove every thing which presents even a plausible difficulty in my way.

After having exhausted your arguments, which possess any apparent or supposed formidableness, you observe, page 62, "Other collateral arguments against the justness of your proposition readily occur."

I. "There being not a word said, in any case of baptism, about the persons changing their apparel, and going to a bath or river, for the express and evident purpose of being immersed."

Ans. Did you never read, Mat. iii. 13. 'Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, (for what?) to be baptized of him.' The plain, literal, and common import of this is, as we have shown from your Letters, as well as from the Scriptures, Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be immersed of him.

As for change of apparel, it might be with them, in John's day, and in the days of the apostles, as it has been with several in this place. When they came from home they thought not of being baptized, but when they *gladly received* the word, love constrained them to obey their Lord; and there was no change of garments in the case, save they threw aside some of their looser garments, and having received the ordinance, put them on again.

II. "The improbability (say you) that the water which was made use of for baptizing the eunuch, as it was a water to which they happened to be near, and was not sought for the purpose, should be in sufficient quantity for his immersion."

Ans. Philip had told the eunuch what the ordinance of baptism meant, or he would not have wished that he might be the subject of it. If he knew what it meant, he would probably know whether they saw a sufficiency of water.

III. Your next collateral argument is, "The difficulty of supposing the three thousand, mentioned Acts ii. 41. to have been immersed in that part of one day which followed their conversion, especially considering the probable want

of bathing places, and their not having at command suitable change of apparel."

Ans. 1. At Jerusalem lived at this time probably not less than three hundred thousand, one-third of these at least were obliged to bathe themselves frequently, on account of some ceremonial uncleanness, and many of the others often; hence there was no want of bathing places.

Ans. 2. There was no want of qualified administrators; for their number appears to have been about an hundred and twenty; compare Acts i. 15. with ii. 2, 3, 4.; these could have baptized the whole in less than an hour.

Ans. 3. As to their probably not having at command suitable change of apparel, this would be thought of little consequence by them, or by any others, who felt the solemnity, the importance, and the spirit of the precious ordinance of gospel baptism. Hence, Sir, here is no difficulty, but to such as have no heart to follow the example of the Lamb of God.

IV. "The form of expression (say you) which Peter uses, Acts x. 47. 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?' and the fact of their being baptized by the command of Peter immediately, and as it would seem on the spot. This question of Peter, and this fact in the narrative, viewed conjunctly, have not the appearance of going to a water, for the purpose of immersing Cornelius, his kinsmen and friends who were with him, but of baptizing him by the application of water produced in some vessel."

Ans. Sir, had we need of any more arguments for immersion, this account of Cornelius would manifestly come to our help, and the following particulars will show it.

1. Cornelius was a Roman captain guarding Judea, which was at this time one of the provinces conquered by the Romans.

2. Cornelius being a Roman officer in a foreign country, probably possessed no land but that on which his house and the barracks for his soldiers stood.

3. Cornelius being a Roman, not a Jew, he would probably not furnish himself with a bath or bathing place.

4. All who know the jealousy of the Jews as to their liberties, and what animosity they have generally borne towards their conquerors, may see at once they would not be very ready to grant favours to a Gentile officer, whose office and presence put them in constant remembrance of their subjection.

5. The Jews probably owned all the bathing places which were for miles round, and Cornelius had no liberty to occupy them without their consent.

Under these circumstances, we may conclude, and very rationally too, that Peter would address the Jews who came from Joppa with him, and others who might possibly be present, and say to them, with relation to his brethren, who were owners of the bathing places round about Cornelius's habitation, Who of us Jews, who believe in God and in his Son Jesus, can be so tenacious of our civil privileges, and bear so much ill will to the Romans, as to forbid water, or the use of some bathing place, that these sinners of the Gentiles, who have now received the Holy Ghost as well as we, should not be permitted to receive the gospel ordinance of baptism? This appears all easy and natural: but to suppose that Peter meant, Can any man forbid a basin of water to be brought in, that these should not be baptized, would be totally and manifestly unnatural, and inconsistent with the attending circumstances. Peter was now in Cornelius's house: Cornelius had both servants and soldiers at a moment's command, and it would perhaps have been the last thing that any one of the company would have thought of, to have forbidden a bowl of water to be brought by one of the servants, at the command of Cornelius. You, Sir, and the reader will judge which side, yours or the Baptist's, is favoured by this collateral argument of yours.

V. Say you, "The strong probability, notwithstanding your suppositions, that the jailer and his house were not baptized by immersion."

For answer, the reader is referred to my sixth Sermon, pages 93, 94, first edition; however, I will reply to a question which you put under this argument. "If here was immersion, (say you) why do we not hear something about a river or bathing place, going out to it, returning, &c.?" *Ans.* We do hear or read in the same chapter, and with respect to the same city where the jailer lived, that there was a river running through the city, or by it. It was by the side of this, where Paul and Silas spake unto the women, where prayer was wont to be made. We also read of the jailer and the apostles coming in, of consequence they must have gone out.

VI. Say you, page 65, "I will just subjoin, for I consult brevity as much as possible, the case of Paul, Acts ix. 18, 19. 'And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.'"

Ans. Why, Sir, did you not mention Acts xxii. 16. where the same history of Paul is related in the following words—‘Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away* thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord’? The reason is sufficiently plain: in this relation of the same transaction, the manner in which water was to be applied to Paul, in the ordinance of baptism, was mentioned by implication. He was to be bathed or immersed in water, and thus, by a figure, he was to wash away his sins, or to have them apparently or figuratively washed away.

Having said what you pleased, and probably every thing which you thought plausible, at least the things which you judged most so, then you observe, as a kind of conclusion, thus,—“I suggest these things cursorily, not pretending that they furnish demonstration, that the uniform import of the term baptize, as used in the Scriptures, is a partial washing short of immersion; for that is not a point I am aiming to establish, but as furnishing *direct proof* against your hypothesis, that the word signifies to immerse, and that only. If there are exceptions, and we see that there is abundant evidence that there are, your main proposition relative to baptism falls, and with it must fall, for this reason, as well as for the other previously given, your whole superstructure of close communion.”

Ans. I have, Sir, two objections against this your conclusion. One is, You tell us about *direct proof* against my hypothesis, when not one passage which you have brought, nor all of them put together, where *baptizō* is used, furnish, strictly speaking, so much as one plausible argument against my hypothesis. When you take the derivative of *baptizō* there is something plausible, but it furnishes no proof, direct or indirect, against it. The most which you can say with safety is, that when the apostle speaks of *diaphorais baptismois*, divers washings, he might mean, or you believe he meant to include more kinds of washings than the multitude of rinsings, scourings in water, and puttings into water, &c. which were enjoined in the ceremonial law. You have no proof, or at least you have given us none, that he intended any other kinds of washings, which did not imply immersion. Even if you could do what you have not done, produce proof that *baptismois* did include some kinds of washings which were not entire immersion, still this would be no direct proof that *baptizō* was ever used to import any thing short of entire immersion. Your proof, therefore, fails you utterly; hence my hypothesis as yet stands securely.

My other objection is, You tell us that there is abundance of evidence that there are exceptions, i. e. that *baptizo* does not always mean immersion, or the like. We have received all your Letters, and find *no evidence*. You have produced several pretended witnesses, but they agree not together, nor does any one of them speak to the point in hand; and even when we summed up your own evidence, it was, that immersion was the only gospel baptism which you could find; hence my main proposition stands, and with it *must stand* my *whole superstructure* of close communion.

In page 66, you mention the appeals which have been made on both sides, to the learned fathers and critics; and then, in page 67, make this excellent declaration and appeal, "We refuse, Sir, (say you) to be bound by human testimony, in an essential article of Christian practice: we appeal to the *oracles of truth*." This is just the resolution and point to which the Baptists wish to bring your denomination. If you might be instrumental of persuading them to refuse human testimony, as the basis of any essential article in the Christian faith, and to take the oracles of truth, as being a sufficient guide in matters of faith and practice, and to believe that the man of God, so far as he understands them, is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, you would do an essential service to the cause of truth, and your praise would be in all the churches. Could this be effected, we might hope for a speedy union between the two denominations. Could we all agree to walk by one rule, we might expect to be soon in one path.

The next thing which in your Letters appears worthy of particular attention, is your solemn address to me, in page 70, a part of which is in the words following,—“I entreat you to come to a solemn pause, and with your eye upon the judgment day, inquire whether you have authority to exclude all Pædobaptists from a visible standing in Christ's kingdom, and from the communion of saints in an ordinance which was given to them as a most valuable bequest of their Redeemer, merely because they have not been baptized in the manner of immersion?”

My reply to you, Sir, is,

1. It was a solemn belief in a judgment to come, and that the light of that day would detect all error, and discover the truth, and bring me to acknowledge it, which greatly subdued the risings of my carnal heart against the close communion Baptists. After I had thought much of the particular sentiments of the Baptists, and had had no small diffi-

culty as to my own practice, their close communion scheme, as I then considered it, appeared to me so erroneous, that I was upon the point of concluding them to be wrong throughout, and of settling down upon my old practice; but, Sir, a solemn belief in a judgment to come, calmed my opposition; and a solemn belief that truth would then appear, and that if the Baptists were in the truth, they would then appear so, prevailed upon me to give their distinguishing sentiments one solemn hearing more. I may say, it was the judgment day as a mean, which made me a Baptist. I have daily a solemn view, or solemn thoughts, on death, judgment, and eternity; and with reference to these, I sometimes desire to do with my might what my hands find to do, for God and the church.

2. My reply is, that I have no authority to exclude you from any place where Christ hath put you, nor from any ordinance which he hath bequeathed to you: but I have no belief of sprinkling, nor of any thing else short of immersion, being gospel baptism. I have no belief of a person's belonging to Christ's visible kingdom, before he is baptized. I have no belief of Christ's having bequeathed the ordinance of the supper to any, till they belong to his visible kingdom; consequently, I have no belief of your having any gospel right to partake of that ordinance; hence, my settled belief is, that I have no liberty to encourage you to come, till you repent of your perversion of the first gospel ordinance, and be baptized.

Say you again, consider, "I beseech you, how your doctrine belittles the glorious and growing kingdom of the Messiah, &c.; how it obliges you to go abreast of the most affecting facts, I mean the wonderful success which has attended the labours of thousands of Pædobaptist ministers"

But, my dear Sir, you have forgotten the appeal which you have but just made to the oracles of truth. On the last page this appeal was made, and now you are appealing to good Pædobaptist ministers, to convict me of an error. I shall no more consent to such an appeal. To the oracles of truth thou hast appealed, and to them thou must go, and by them thou and thy works must be judged. By them convict either me or my doctrines, and I am silent. But at no other tribunal do I for the present consent to meet you, or to be tried myself.

Wishing that we may both of us be prepared to meet the God of truth, in Him who is the *truth*,

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

REVEREND SIR,

I NOW hasten to a review of your examination of my Sermon on the subjects of baptism.

In page 72, you complain of my statement of the question, which relates to the command to disciple all nations. I stated it thus: The important question to be decided is just this—*If I disciple any of you who are parents, do I, as a necessary consequence, disciple all your children and households?*

You object—“No, Sir, this is not just the question; the question respects the object of this act of discipling. Whom are you to *disciple*? the text says, All nations.” Very well; and do not nations consist of parents, with their children and households? In the next page you say, “The capability of the objects must certainly be supposed; but there can be no capability in the infant part of a nation, but by virtue of their relation to their parents.” Very well again; this comes to just what I said—If your scheme be just, we disciple the children by discipling the parents.

Before we proceed any further, we will give our Saviour’s definition of a disciple, Luke xiv. 33. ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.’ Now, Sir, the important question is just this—If through my instrumentality a parent forsakes all that he hath, and so becomes a disciple, do the infant children and household become disciples of course? This is your scheme, Sir, but it is not mine nor the gospel’s.

In connexion, you ask, “Is it impossible for God to perfect praise from the mouth of babes and sucklings, and that of such, in part, his kingdom of *grace* should consist?” From what motive you asked this question, which, from its connexion, tends to deceive the inattentive, I know not, but to it I reply—You have changed the subject in debate; we are not speaking of the kingdom of *grace*, but of Christ’s visible kingdom: besides, the babes and sucklings which are spoken of in the gospel, and of which Christ’s visible kingdom does no doubt in part consist, are such as cried in the temple, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David.

You complain again, because I substituted *disciple* for *teach*, and so make the command of our Lord to be, Go and disciple all nations; yet in the next page you say, “The substitution of the term *disciple*, is much more favourable to

the cause of the Pædobaptists than to yours." Why so? Because, as you implicitly tell us in the preceding sentence, and imply in this, that children cannot be taught by virtue of their relation to their parents, but that they may be disciplined by virtue of this relation. But, Sir, you quite forget your appeal to the oracles of truth, or determine not to abide their decision, or you could never suppose that an infant, or that a child of any age, could, by virtue of his relation to his parents, forsake all that he hath, and so become a disciple of Christ. "But (in the close you say) allow, in this respect also, all that you wish, that the command extends to adults only, what will follow? Will it follow that this passage interdicts infant baptism? By no means," say you. I answer, By all means, it does interdict all others; for the text, Mat. xxviii. 19. is the general orders, and it is the particular orders, which Jesus Christ hath given, relative to the subjects of baptism, and he hath given us no different orders. When he hath pointed out, and particularly designated, who are to be admitted to his ordinance of baptism, he interdicts all others, and none else have a right to come; nor have his ministers any authority to baptize any others; and it is gross presumption, if they knowingly administer to persons of a different description.

You next examine three short arguments of mine, against infant baptism.

1. John made his hearers disciples, before he baptized them.

2. Christ's disciples baptized none, but such as were made disciples first, according to John iv. 1, 2.

3. Christ, in my text, gives no liberty to baptize any, but such as are first disciplined.

You assent to each of these arguments, as being well founded; nay, if possible, you do more: you inform us that the case of infant baptism was not mentioned by John, by Jesus Christ, or by his disciples. Your words are, "There was good reason why, when baptism was introduced, as administered to the Jews, the case of infants was not mentioned: it is doubtful whether they were baptized; I am inclined to think they were not." Now, Sir, if there were good reason why, when baptism was introduced, as administered to the Jews, the case of infants was not mentioned, then it was not; if it were not mentioned then, among the Jews, it was not mentioned at all by Jesus Christ, for he was no where else. If it were not mentioned by Christ, it is not in the gospel of Jesus Christ; for none

had authority to add any thing but what he had commanded. This being the case, surely you have not expressed yourself too strongly, where you say, "It is doubtful whether they (infants) were baptized; I am inclined to think they were not." But if this be the truth, that neither John, nor Jesus Christ, the Christian Lawgiver, nor his disciples, so much as mentioned infant baptism, I wish to know by what authority you and your brethren practise it? and who gave you this authority? From Christ you received it not; for you confess that he mentioned it not in his days, or you say, "there was good reason why the case of infants was not then mentioned." You also confess, his disciples did not mention it in the days of Christ, nor for I know not how long afterwards. The apostles have, indeed, no where said a word of infant baptism. By what authority then do you teach infant baptism, and presume to practise it? and who gave you this authority? Have you any authority, save from the *popes* of Rome, from the mother of harlots, the mystery of iniquity, comprising the kings of the earth, who are at war with the Lamb?

Wishing you wisdom and grace enough to renounce the traditions of popes and councils, and to practise by gospel rules,

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

REVEREND SIR,

YOUR Letter upon the covenant of circumcision, demands our next attention. You manifest a very strong attachment to this covenant: you consider it to be the insurmountable obstacle in our way, and the hinge on which hangs the controversy between us; yes, you set it down to be the rock on which are all our hopes. You tell us, "if we do not keep it, we are *inevitably lost* forever."

It might be thought by some to be a sufficient answer, to ask, What then hath become of Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, and many others, who lived and died long before the covenant of circumcision had existence? But, Sir, as your mind is highly intent on this covenant, and as I indeed consider it an important article, I will set it before you with as much perspicuity as I can.

To clear the way to introduce the covenant of circumcision, I will just mention the covenant which includes the promises which were made to Abraham and to his seed; 'not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ,' Gal. iii. 16. This covenant was before time; but it was confirmed of God in Christ, (to Abraham) twenty years before the covenant of circumcision was made or mentioned, verse 17. This covenant, which included the promises of grace, was mentioned or intimated, Gen. xii. 3. The same covenant, or some of the promises contained in it, or flowing from it, are again mentioned, Gen. xii. 7. xv. 8. and xvii. 1—8. and in many other places. With regard to this covenant, there is no professed difficulty between your denomination and the Baptists, save in one point, whether this covenant and that of circumcision be the same.

You believe this covenant contains all the promises of grace, and that this covenant and that of circumcision are one and the same covenant.

We believe this covenant contains Christ, and as all the promises of grace are in Christ, so all the promises are contained in this covenant; and that the covenant of circumcision is a covenant distinct from this, and is but a token of this. We believe the first covenant, which, for the sake of distinction, is called the covenant of grace, comprises this covenant of circumcision, so far as circumcision was of grace; but we do not believe that the covenant of grace was the covenant of circumcision; we believe the latter covenant to be a *token* of the former, and yet so distinct from it as to be two distinct covenants. Our inquiry shall be, Do not the Scriptures say the same things?

Before I make the proposed inquiry I have a few things to observe.

1. The covenant of grace is what God agrees, if I may so say, or covenants, or promises to do for Abraham, his posterity, and for the family of mankind; or that which God hath promised to do for the human family, is the visible part of the covenant of grace, as it respects the good of man.

2. The covenant of circumcision is what God required Abraham to agree to and to practise.

3. The first covenant was repeatedly mentioned, and was confirmed by the promise of God, before the second was once brought to view.

4. The covenant of circumcision appears to be no more the covenant of grace, in which are the promises, than my

believing in and approving of the mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ, is that all-sufficient righteousness. God required Abraham and his natural seed to observe the covenant of circumcision; he requires me and all others to believe. The soul who was not circumcised, had broken the covenant; so the unbeliever is condemned already, Gen. xvii. 14. John iii. 18.

5. By confounding these two covenants together, you confound yourself, and confuse your readers and hearers, and obtain some unreasonable plausibility in favour of your unscriptural notions of baptizing children.

6. If these covenants were one, still they neither of them say a word about the baptism of children, or of Christian baptism for any person; nor are they ever mentioned by Christ, by his disciples, or by any others, as giving any right to baptism, unless it were by the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to John's baptism.

7. The covenant of circumcision is but a token of the covenant between God and Abraham; or a token of God's promises being to Abraham for good, and a seal of Abraham's faithfulness.

Now our inquiry shall be—Say not the Scriptures the same things?

In the first place, the Scriptures tell us, that God promised to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. The Scriptures also assure us, that God promised to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan, and that God would make him the father of many nations, Gen. xii. 7. xv. 18. xvii. 1—8. These are promises contained in the covenant of grace, or these are the covenant of grace, as manifested to Abraham; or they are promises founded upon, or flowing from, that covenant.

In the next place, the Scriptures say, Gen. xvii. 10, 11. *'This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a TOKEN of the covenant betwixt me and you.'* Hence, if you can understand two plain verses in the Bible, you may understand what the covenant of circumcision is. In these two verses we have the same thing mentioned four times, in different words: first, God says, *This is my covenant*; secondly, he tells what it is, *Every man-child among you shall be circumcised*; thirdly, God informs us how this covenant is

to be kept, Ye shall *circumcise* the flesh of your foreskin ; fourthly, God informs us what is the end or use of this covenant of circumcision, It shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt Him and Abraham.

Here the covenant of circumcision equals every man-child being circumcised ; every man-child being circumcised equals the circumcising the flesh of their foreskin ; the circumcising the flesh of their foreskin equals the *token* of the covenant betwixt God and Abraham ; hence, the *token* of the covenant betwixt God and Abraham equals the covenant of circumcision ; for it is a well known axiom, That things that are equal to the same are equal to one another : hence, Sir, you must say, that a *token* of a covenant is the *covenant itself*, which is absurd, or that the covenant of circumcision is a covenant in distinction from the covenant of grace, or in distinction from that covenant which contains the promises.

Besides, if you will still hold that the covenant of circumcision and that of grace are the same thing, you fall into another absurdity, which ought to alarm you, and it will confound your sentiment. The absurdity is this,—If the covenant of grace, which contains the promise of the Messiah, and the covenant of circumcision, be one and the same thing, then the covenant of grace, which contains the promise of the Messiah, may be broken, and hath been thousands of times ; for the covenant of circumcision was broken every time and as often as any male child among the Jews was not circumcised, Gen. xvii. 14. Thus absurd are your notions of the covenant of circumcision ; and by these absurd notions, you would lead men blindfold into the antichristian notion of infant baptism : for, say as much as you please, there is not one of your hearers or readers, who can see that infant baptism, as a gospel duty, is found in the Jewish rite of circumcision. By such dark notions you may lead the blind blindfold, but you can never in this way instruct the ignorant, or reclaim those who wander out of the way. Christ hath no where taught you to teach thus, and you ought to be careful how you thus teach for the future.

You probably may suppose that you have an objection of some magnitude, against my idea of the covenant of circumcision, because it is said, Gen. xvii. 13. ‘ My covenant shall be *in your flesh* for an *everlasting covenant*.’ *Ans.* This *everlasting covenant* of circumcision was to be of the same duration with the *everlasting possession* which the Lord promised to give the seed of Abraham, in the land of Canaan, verse 8 : neither of them was intended to continue without end.

Your denomination are often, if not continually, telling the world about circumcision being a *seal* of the *covenant*. You would much oblige us, would you inform us by what authority you employ this *blind* to prevent the ignorant from seeing.

We read, Rom. iv. 11. of circumcision being a *seal* of the *righteousness* of *Abraham's faith*, but this gives you no authority to impose upon your hearers the false and mischievous idea of its being a seal of the covenant, and so they must have their children sprinkled, to put them into the covenant. A more wicked idea the *man of sin* probably never advanced to a credulous world.

By this time you may conclude that either you or I know nothing about the covenant of circumcision. That the readers may judge for themselves, and know where the truth lies, I will set down, in the margin, the texts which speak of circumcision, from Genesis to Revelation.*

You say, page 84, speaking of the covenant of grace, "If circumcision was a seal of this covenant, which preceded Christ, and is abolished, beyond all question baptism is ordained in its stead. I should admit this, if I were a Baptist." Admit what, Sir, if you were a Baptist? "If circumcision was a seal of this covenant." Yes, Sir, if circumcision were a *seal* of the *covenant of grace*, and all who were circumcised were *sealed* in this covenant of grace, we would admit just what you might please to prescribe. But, Sir, the whole of this business of circumcision being a seal, as multitudes are in our day made to believe, is a mere farce, or religious imposition.

I now leave the covenant of circumcision to your future consideration, and come to review a few of your words which relate to Lydia. Speaking of what I observed of Lydia and her household, after mentioning several things which I suggested, and leaving out the little evidence which I set down, namely, 'That Paul entered into the house of Lydia, and there comforted the brethren,' you say, "These suppositions, Sir, may be founded in truth, but who knows that they are; who, that can justly make any pretensions to impartiality, can believe them without evidence?" Your

* Gen. xvii. 10—14, 23—27. xxxiv. 15, 17, 22, 24. Exod. iv. 26. Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Josh. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Jer. iv. 4. ix. 25, 26. Luke ii. 21. John vii. 22, 23. Acts vii. 8. x. 45. xi. 2, 3. xv. 1, 5. xvi. 3. xxi. 21. Rom. ii. 25, 26, 28, 29. iii. 1, 30. iv. 9—12. xv. 8. I Cor. vii. 18, 19. Gal. ii. 3, 7, 8, 9. v. 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15. Eph. ii. 11. Phil. iii. 3, 5. Col. ii. 11. iii. 11. iv. 11.

conclusion is, "Upon the whole, as suppositions are miserable arguments, the evidence is left just where you found it."

Were I, Sir, to join with you in sentiment, and were your readers to be of the same opinion, that *suppositions* are *miserable arguments*, we might all of us have one idea suggested to our minds at the same moment, whether your arguments be not all of them of that description. But, especially if suppositions be miserable arguments, why do you and your denomination rest the important points of baptism and its subjects on just such miserable arguments? For, make the best of the arguments for infant sprinkling, or even for infant baptism, they are but suppositions, and but poor improbable ones too; yet, in the face of your brethren, you say, *suppositions* are *miserable arguments*. Such an assertion, if true, is enough to ruin the practice of infant sprinkling, or at least the credit of such a practice.

You *suppose* that *baptizō* is sometimes used for sprinkling or partial washing, but you produce no evidence, unless it be supposititious evidence, that it is ever once so used in any part of the Bible.

You suppose that *baptizō* is sometimes used as equivalent with *niptō*, but you find no place where it is thus used, or have no evidence that it is thus, unless it be supposed evidence, which comes only to supposition.

You suppose that *baptismois* is used for the application of fluids in every way, but still you want evidence.

You suppose that Christ's blessing little children is an argument in favour of infant baptism.

You suppose that what Peter said about the promise of the Spirit, as being to parents and children, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call, is for infant baptism.

You suppose that the baptism of Lydia's household, of the jailer's household, and of Stephanas's, are all in favour of infant baptism.

You *suppose* that many other things are also in its favour; but it is all but bare supposition, for not a syllable is mentioned of infant baptism from Genesis to Revelation. Now, is it not surprising that you should tell the world, (not your opponents only, but your friends too) that *suppositions* are *miserable arguments*? In fact, Sir, if this be admitted, and should it be generally received, that suppositions are miserable arguments, your *examination* of my Sermons will lose its influence, and so will your whole cause of sprinkling and infant baptism.

The next thing to be noticed, is your reply to the following proposition. I observed, 'Abraham's children after the flesh were not included in the promise, as Pædobaptists of our day would have theirs.' You reply, as though you did not understand me—"If you mean (say you) that they were not all participants in the blessings of the promise, it is admitted." If you, Sir, did not understand me before, I will endeavour that you may now. What I mean is this—'They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed; for this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son,' Rom. ix. 8, 9. Not, Hagar shall have a son; not, Keturah shall have six sons. Abraham had eight sons, but Isaac was the only one of the eight to whom was the promise. Now, you say this promise, which was to Abraham and his seed, is to you and to all your children: hence you, having eight sons, claim the promise to each of the eight, when Abraham could claim it but for one of his. Do you and your brethren suppose, that you have each one of you eight parts in the promise, and Abraham but one? It is no wonder, Sir, that you could not understand me. I desire that you might, for the future, have a good understanding, when you speak of the promise, as being to you and to your children, and of putting them into the covenant, or putting the *seal* of the covenant upon them.

In pages 88, 89, you have the remarkable passage which follows: "In pages 96, 97, and 98, (i. e. of my Sermons) you run (say you) the doctrine of pædobaptism into what you call legitimate consequences: they are eight in number, and they are frightful things indeed. If you have supposed pædobaptism embarrassed with all these consequences, I am perfectly astonished how you could find a conscience to practise it, as you have done."

Reply. Is it not, Sir, more astonishing that you can practise it, after these consequences are laid before you? But you find a very easy way to get rid, as you suppose, of the whole difficulty: the way you take is this—say you, "All these consequences, Sir, will be denied by every *intelligent advocate* for infant baptism." How intelligent, I will not presume to say, a person must be, to hold a promise and deny all the legitimate consequences. Should you, or any of your denomination, hereafter undertake to deny the consequences which I drew, you are desired to state the principle, and then show the disagreement between that and my conse-

quences. The principle of the Pædobaptists is this—"The subjects of baptism are to be determined by the subjects of circumcision." The first account which we have of the subjects of circumcision, and perhaps as particular account as any which is given us, is in the family of Abraham. Abraham was a great and good man, and on his account all the males in his house were to be circumcised, whether they were young or old, his own children, or bought with money, or born in his house. Before he was commanded to circumcise his household, he had three hundred and eighteen training soldiers, born in his own house: how many more were born in his house, or bought with his money, before the day of their circumcision, we know not; but let it be more or less, one thing is certain, they were all to be circumcised, on account of Abraham's being a good man, full of faith.

Now, Sir, your principle, or the principle of your denomination, is, that the subjects of baptism are to be determined by the subjects of circumcision.

Hence, my *first* consequence was—Every man who is converted to the Christian religion is to be baptized, and all his household, though he may have three hundred and eighteen training soldiers born in his own house. Not only are these soldiers, but their wives and children, and all other servants who belong to this great man's house. A thousand infidels are to be baptized, because one great man, their master, is christianized.

My *second* consequence was—These soldiers, with their wives, children, and servants, are all to be considered and treated as church members, or as being in covenant: in the covenant of circumcision, or some similar.

Thus were the circumcised considered and treated. If baptism have taken the place of circumcision, and the subjects of the one are to be determined by the other, then must these soldiers, wives, and children be considered and treated in the same manner.

The other consequences the reader will find in my sixth Sermon, and consult them at his leisure.

Now, Sir, how you could, without mentioning either principle or consequence, tell the world, both learned and unlearned, "that all these consequences will be denied by every *intelligent advocate* for infant baptism," is a little to be wondered at. I have hardly intelligence enough to understand what you intend by an *intelligent advocate* for infant baptism. By what you have said, I should naturally enough

conclude, that by an intelligent advocate for infant baptism, you intend one who knows how to advocate principles and deny the natural consequences, and deduce others to his liking.

You say, "That my consequences are *frightful things*." I drew them that you might attend to them, and be *frightened* or driven from your antichristian principle: but you still hold the principle, at least in measure, and secure or content yourself under the idea, that every intelligent advocate for infant baptism will deny my consequences. How you will answer it to the British church, to the popes of Rome, and to a multitude of other learned Pædobaptists, who have practised upon a number of my conclusions, and admitted the rest as true, save the fifth and last, for placing them among the unintelligents, is left for you to determine.

The last consequence which I drew from this Pædobaptist principle, That the subjects of baptism are to be determined by the subjects of circumcision, is—It doth, so far as it hath its perfect work, destroy the very idea of the gospel church, contradict the prophets, and make Paul and others speak not the truth; and it throws us back to the state of the Jewish church.

To this you see fit to reply, and your reply hath the appearance of a laboured attempt to confound the distinction between the Jewish church and the gospel church, and to make your readers believe them to be both one and the same thing. Your very reply goes to prove that your principle would, if true, throw us back to the state of the Jewish church; and thus it proves my consequence true.

In your reply, you keep a just idea of the Jewish church altogether out of sight; you do not mention so much as one just trait of it. Your arguments to prove the gospel church and the Jewish church to be one, are—*First*, God manifested great kindness to the Jewish church; he carried them as on eagles' wings, and some of them greatly rejoiced in the Lord: *Secondly*, That the Jewish church consisted of such persons as were Abraham and Isaac: these are your words—"Are Baptist churches generally purer, think you, than a church would be composed of such persons as *Abraham*; and where is the inconsistency or danger of admitting the testimony of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vii. 14. that the children are visibly holy as *Isaac* was?"

There is, Sir, no inconsistency or danger in admitting the testimony of the Holy Ghost; but there is both inconsistency and danger in *wresting* the testimony of the Holy Ghost, or in *misapplying* it.

Why, Sir, do you not come out in fair day-light, and tell all your readers, and especially such as love darkness rather than light, that the Jewish church consisted of all the rebellious, stiff-necked, and infidel Jews, including Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and all hypocrites among them, as well as the few godly ones who might be found; and that the gospel church is just like the Jewish, so far as it can be, by including all persons, of every description, who have been baptized or sprinkled, and have not been cast out by regular church discipline? Come out thus, and let poor deluded souls know your real sentiment, or a fair statement of it; then might they judge for themselves. If you deny this being your sentiment, I will prove it to you. Pages 87, 88, your words are—"I am as much shocked at your dereliction of *infant membership* and *infant baptism*, as I should have been had you denied the obligation of family prayer." Now, Sir, you believe that baptized or sprinkled infants are church members: the consequence is this—A large part, perhaps more than half, of the infants, children, infidels, drunkards, and liars, in our nation, are members of the gospel church. Sir, either renounce the erroneous principle on which infant baptism hangs, or admit the *legitimate* consequences, and make the best of them. If you please, never again think to get rid of my consequences, by telling the public that every intelligent advocate for infant baptism will deny them.

I have one thing more to notice, in your plea for the gospel church being the same as the Jewish: it is this—"How does pædobaptism (say you) destroy the very idea of the gospel church?" You, Sir, answer, "A gospel church is a body of visible saints or holy persons." What do you mean by this answer? If you mean, by visible saints and holy persons, such as appear to possess holiness of heart, or to be believers in Christ, I readily agree to it: but, Sir, you mean no such thing; you mean, a gospel church is a body of persons, composed of believing parents, together with their baptized or sprinkled children, let their children be what they may, believers or infidels, if they have not been cut off from the church by discipline: or you mean a body of persons made up of a number of converted heads of families, with their ungodly, unconverted families. See your Letters, pages 90, 91, 92, and elsewhere.

This is the way which your own church is made up, if your practice has been in agreement with your principles—holding to infant membership, and children membership, and servant membership.

I do not mention these different church memberships, because I wish to cast odium on your character, or on that of your brethren, but because I consider these to belong to the inevitable consequences of your principle, which every *intelligent advocate* for infant baptism ought candidly to admit, and because I wish to expose your antichristian principle, and your corresponding antichristian practice.

Wishing you reformation, in both principle and practice,
I am, &c.

LETTER X.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE reviewed, with some attention, your Ten Letters, which you consider as an Examination of my Seven Sermons. In your Letters, which you have given to the public, you have said of me and of my Sermons what you pleased. Of your performance, I have nothing to say as to its strength or weakness, or with respect to your assertions, repetitions, or arguments; they are all before the public, as are my Sermons, and as this Review I expect will soon be. Not only are my Sermons and your Examination before the public, but they are both before HIM, who knows what is truth, and whether either of us, or whether both of us have written and published with our eye single, and our wills bowed to his.

In this Letter several things may be laid before you, with a desire that you may receive the light of gospel truth, relative to the first gospel ordinance: but, Sir, unless God be pleased to give you a *large share* of grace, you will not so much desire the light of conviction, as the light by which to refute what I have written. But if there be no hope of your conviction from any argument of mine, yet it is possible that you will yield to your own arguments; for you have, indeed, given us the outlines of an argument or two, the force of which I see not how you will handsomely evade.

Your first premise is—"There must be some evident likeness between the subject to which a word is applied in the natural, primitive use of it, and the subject to which it is applied as a figure, otherwise there is a gross impropriety in the figurative use of it." You cannot easily get rid of the plain truth of this your major proposition.

Your second premise is—The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a subject to which the words burying and rising as from the dead, are applied as a figure, and water baptism is undoubtedly a *symbol* of the baptism of the *Holy Ghost*. These are your *own premises*, (see pages 61, 44, 33, 34.) You are desired to draw your *own conclusion*.

You will permit me to refresh your memory, with a confession and promise, which you made to me in your first Letter, and in these words, “As for me, I consider truth infinitely preferable to any party interest, and *promise* to you that I will yield to evidence, as soon as it is presented.”

Another of your arguments in favour of the Baptists shall be presented; for I sincerely wish that your arguments may be found unanswerable, and that they may instrumentally produce your thorough conversion.

Your major proposition, in this second argument, is—The subject in debate between the Baptists and Pædobaptists, is of great importance, and it *can* be brought to an issue, and it *must* be brought to an issue. (See page 98.)

Your minor proposition is—“All the treatises and schemes which the Pædobaptists have produced, in order to settle this debate, have been *embarrassed* with material objections,” page 95. It therefore *cannot* be brought to an issue upon their *embarrassed treatises* or *schemes*, “but it *can* be brought to an issue, and it *must* be brought to an issue.”

Conclusion—We *can* be Baptists, and we *must* be Baptists, and that will bring the *debate* to an *issue*.

Now, Sir, I will present you with an argument or two, which may be partly yours and partly mine.

What I say is, The plain, the literal, the common meaning of the word to baptize is to immerse, bury, overwhelm, put into water, or the like: you say this is the meaning sometimes, especially when it means to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and water baptism is undoubtedly a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; therefore, the plain, literal, and common sense of the baptismal command is, that the subjects of baptism should be immersed, buried, or put into water, or the like.

Again—what I say is, The word to baptize hath in the Bible no meaning different from immersion, overwhelming, or the like. You have tried, and have found nothing, to *prove* that it hath any opposite meaning, except it be by suppositions, which you say are miserable arguments: therefore, the only Bible meaning of the word to baptize is to immerse, overwhelm, or the like; or at most, there is nothing against it but *miserable arguments*.

Again—The word baptism, and even in Heb. ix. 10. where it is said divers baptisms, the meaning is divers applications of water to divers subjects, all which imply immersion, or putting into water, or the like, or at best there is nothing but suppositions against this being the sense; and even if it had any different sense, since the gospel baptism is but one baptism, and this is certainly immersion sometimes, as when they were baptized in the river, and when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, of which water baptism is a symbol; and, consequently, at all times; the conclusion is still the same—that the *only gospel baptism* is by *immersion*.

Another matter, quite worthy of your attention, I have to lay before you and your brethren: it is this—You and your brethren have presumed to claim some authority, or at least credit, for pædobaptism, and for sprinkling children, from confessors and martyrs, who have held those traditionary practices. Now, Sir, the fact appears to be, that you have not the least shadow of ground for any of your pretended authority or credit from this quarter. It is manifest, that you do but amuse and mislead your hearers and readers, in the whole of this business. Where are your martyrs, who have died in defence of pædobaptism and sprinkling? Do you find them in Fox's martyrology? Do you find them in the Bible? Do you find them any where? No, Sir, you find no such martyrs, either amongst Protestants or Papists. You find good men and martyrs amongst those who have embraced the error of baptizing children, and even amongst those who may have consented to sprinkle them; but not one who has ever laid down his life as a witness for either of those errors; indeed, there has been no call for any to do thus; for his holiness the pope, and his clergy, the cage of unclean birds, and other portions of antichrist, have never opposed these errors. It appears that Satan would be divided against himself, should he stimulate any of his subjects to persecute unto death any good men, for holding either of these antichristian traditions. But both Papists and Protestant Pædobaptists have persecuted unto various kinds of death, the Baptists, who have nobly laid down their lives, as witnesses for the gospel baptism and the gospel subjects.

For opposing infant baptism, and for maintaining the doctrine of the Baptists, hundreds, about the year 1529, were put to death at Saltzburg, in the Palatinate, at Altze, in Germany, and at many other places, and at many other times.*

* See Crosby's History of the English Baptists, Preface, page 30; and History, pages 32, 42, &c.

The general manner of their death was to be beheaded, roasted, or drowned.

It would, indeed, have been a surprising thing, had it been as you and your brethren intimate, that good men have died as witnesses of the traditions of popes and councils. Wicked men may die, in vindication of their own errors; but we are not to expect that good men will die as martyrs, for the errors which the wicked have propagated among the saints. You will be kind enough, I hope, never to force this argument into your service again, till you can, amongst all the martyrs of Jesus, find one who has been called to lay down his life, as a witness to your error of sprinkling children.

Your attention is requested, Sir, to one thing more. You and your brethren are not only contrary from both the Old Testament and the New, but you are contrary from each other, and you begin to be contrary from all men. From your Examination of my Sermons, pages 12, 13, 16, 17, you appear not to know when baptism is to be administered; whether at the time when members are admitted into the church, soon after it, or long after, or whether it be necessary at all, in order to church membership, or whether before or after the Lord's supper. When men come to know nothing about a subject, prudence dictates that it is time to drop it. You would never traverse such a crooked course, with relation to baptism, did you understand how to go straight. You would, Sir, do well to say no more about baptism, or else take the Bible for your guide, or pay some attention to the church of Christ, which is the *pillar and ground of the truth*: you now set aside both, and hence it is that you have lost sight of the subject. You must, indeed, persuade Christians to believe baptism to be of little worth, or they cannot rest contented with the manner of your handling that important gospel ordinance.

You inform us, that no one hath written well on the subject of baptism, or "that there is no scheme but what is embarrassed with *material* objections," (page 94,) or at least, there is none on your side of the question but what is thus embarrassed. At the same time, you treat with very little respect what hath been attempted by the Baptists: this being the case, the public will probably expect not only something new on the subject, and something great, but something free of embarrassments, when you shall see fit to favour them with your volume, which you encourage us to expect.

Wishing you the true knowledge of gospel baptism,

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING traversed through your Letters, I proceed to your Appendix. In it you were pleased to notice my pamphlet, entitled, *Open Communion with all who keep the Ordinances as Christ delivered them to the Saints*. "As it comes out in the form of letters, addressed to Mr. Anderson, the duty of replying to it (say you) is properly his, I shall not take it out of his hands, but beg leave to trouble you with a few remarks on what I find in this work."

Mr. Anderson is, Sir, confessedly the proper person to reply, and no doubt he will, if he still consider his ground defensible, and have arguments at hand for the business; but as my Letters to him were not of a private or personal nature, but implicated all his denomination, as being with him in the same error, he probably will not take it unkindly, that you sent out your Appendix, as a precursor to what might follow. You, Sir, it is presumed, said but little in your Appendix, compared with what you consider might be said; you will, therefore, not be offended, should I, whilst replying to you, keep something in reserve against Mr. Anderson shall appear with the main body of arguments: I shall, however, endeavour to silence some of your supposed refutation, and remove your supposed strength, in which you trust.

It is worthy to be noticed, that in the second page of your Appendix, you tell me, "that I am responsible to the religious public, to prove that to baptize invariably means to immerse, and that only." I consider this, Sir, to be already done, at least so far that you have not been able to disprove it: besides, this point may receive some additional light, before the Letters now writing shall be closed.

You add, in the same page, "The world must not be imposed upon by round assertions and dogmatic declamation," nor by *suppositions*, you should have said. "We are not (say you) to be put out of the visible society of believers, but for some evident disqualifying reason. And now you are seriously called upon to prove from the Bible, what with such an air of certainty you assume." Have patience with me, and if the Lord will, I shall endeavour all you ask: this you may expect in my next Letter.

In page 99, you tell us, that “the difficulty is wholly on our part, and that it is without foundation.” Here, Sir, you mistake in whole. Is the difficulty on our part, when you are continually taking from the people the *key of knowledge*, by *wrestling* the Scriptures, by misapplying them, and by many erroneous interpretations, so far as they respect gospel baptism and its subjects? Not only so, but ye enter not into the kingdom of heaven yourselves, and them that are entering in ye hinder. The whole tenor of your Letters to me, is to justify your own neglect of duty, as it respects baptism, and to prevent others from complying with theirs: or, (to express the matter in milder terms,) the manifest object of your Letters is to justify your practice of sprinkling instead of immersion, and to encourage others to believe and practise the same, when you have not found, and cannot find, one sentence or word in all the Scriptures, to warrant your practice, or justify your departure from gospel baptism. You have searched, and by searching have found that you have nothing but suppositions and uncertain conjectures, for your infant sprinkling or infant baptism. *Miserable basis* this, for the foundation of our faith in the first gospel ordinance. On such a basis stands your faith; and by such weak and beggarly arguments would you drive us from gospel baptism, or to consent to the validity of sprinkling; and not only so, but you contend with us, because we choose not to rest our faith and venture our practice on such conjectural ground, when we have for our present faith and practice the broad basis of all the Bible, fairly and unequivocally in our favour, so far as it mentions the subject. You surely ought to have had better arguments, and some facts in your favour, before you pronounced, in the face of inspiration and before the world, “that the difficulty is wholly on the Baptists’ part, and without foundation.”

The next and last thing in your pamphlet is now to be considered: it is your particular refutation of my sentiments on open communion with all who keep the ordinances as Christ delivered them to the saints. This your supposed refutation must have a particular examination, for it is calculated to mislead those who examine things very partially.

I propose to state your refutation as explicitly as I can, and try its strength as concisely as may be. You begin your refutation thus—“The leading principles of your defence seem to be these:—

“I. The fault, say you, is wholly ours, because we refuse to submit to an expressly appointed ordinance of the

gospel." "We contend, that we as seriously reverence, and as conscientiously observe this ordinance, as the Baptists: but your manner of applying water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, has nothing to do with baptism: here we are at issue. You have yet furnished no proof; we have furnished *clear demonstration* to the contrary."

Ans. This, Sir, is the *whole* of your refutation of what you set down for my first principle.

I have two questions to propose, and then shall leave this part of your refutation to your future reflections. The *first* is, you say, "We as seriously reverence, and as conscientiously observe the gospel ordinance of baptism, as the Baptists." What do you call a serious and conscientious observance of this ordinance? Saying all you can against it? Refusing to submit to it, and substituting man's invention in the room of it? We wish you to be delivered from such serious and conscientious observances of the commandments and inventions of men. Besides, it is your sentiment, that this ordinance is to be observed or received when we are infants, when we can know nothing about it. How much *serious reverence* and *conscientiousness* infants have we know not. *Secondly*—The strength of your refutation is supposed, no doubt, to be in your concluding words, which are, "You have yet furnished no proof; we have furnished *clear demonstration* to the contrary." This is worthy of observation—"We have furnished (say you) *clear demonstration*!" The question is, to whom? and where? we have not seen it. *Clear demonstration*! this is all we want: if you have furnished it, it ought to have been written in capitals, that not one of your readers should have passed it over unnoticed. The truth is, you have mistaken the business: you have furnished no demonstration of any kind, save it be this, that you are opposing the only gospel baptism, and that the contrary from what you advocate is true.

Your statement of my next principle is,

"II. You tell us, (say you to me) the perfect idea in the present controversy is, "The actual communion at the Lord's table is to be confined to baptized believers."

This principle, Sir, you implicitly grant to be true, and my statement just; and contend that you are baptized; and, instead of *clear demonstration*, bring in your congregations as witnesses that you have been the subjects of gospel baptism, by your having been sprinkled in your infancy, which is a mere human substitute for gospel baptism. But, Sir, you

know, or ought to, that these congregations, from whom you have so taken the key of knowledge, that they know not what baptism is, or to whom it should be administered, are no witnesses in this case. You have taught them to misunderstand the plain sense of the Bible, and to read sprinkling for baptism, and Abraham's household for disciples of Christ; and now would constrain us to admit them as witnesses. No, Sir, we shall admit no such suborned or tutored evidence: we ask for your *clear demonstration*.

III. You state my *third* principle to be—"The being born of water or baptism, is the perfect and visible line of separation between the visible kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world." "Your grand, and as far as I have observed, your only text to prove this is John iii. 5. 'Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' But this darling doctrine is refuted—

"1. By what you do; for you baptize persons upon the ground of evidence that they have been already born of the Spirit, and therefore are, before baptism, visible believers."

Ans. This, Sir, we at once grant, but how does this refute my doctrine? But you add, "and of the kingdom," as though to be a *visible believer*, and a *member* of the *visible* kingdom of Christ, were one and the same thing. By thus confounding things you may keep truth out of sight, and blind your readers, but you can never in this way refute my doctrine.

"2. This darling doctrine (say you to me) is refuted by what you say; for you tell us, that John's baptism was gospel baptism; that the multitudes from all Judea and Jerusalem, who embraced John's baptism, previously brought forth fruits of repentance, yet when they were baptized they were only prepared to be introduced into the kingdom of the Messiah." Sir, I find no fault when you misquote my words, provided you retain the idea, but here you have mistaken both. Speaking of the people made ready and prepared by John, my words are, page 49, 'Of this people, and of this only, for aught appears, Christ took and formed the first *visible gospel* church; or this *prepared people* were the church, though not yet organized.' Had you quoted my words, this part of your refutation might have been spared.

3. You tell me that my doctrine "is refuted by the text itself; for whatever be designed by the kingdom of God, and whatever is to be understood here by being born of water and of the Spirit, both are necessary, as pre-requisites

to a person's entering into the kingdom of God. The *birth* goes before the *entrance*." *Ans.* If you will be kind enough to inform the public for how long a time a person must be born before he enters into the world, then they will possess a necessary datum to understand your new doctrine, that the *birth* goes before the *entrance*; till you do this, your third refutation might also have been spared, for the public will not be able to understand this new doctrine, without some clue to it. In the mean time, the common sense of the public will lead them to believe my doctrine, that the *birth* is the *entrance*.

Say you again, "The being born of water is placed before being born of the Spirit." *Ans.* If you will read the third verse, which you had just mentioned, which speaks of being born again, you may find your mistake.

4. My doctrine, you say, "is refuted by abundance of other Scripture evidence; for example, there were multitudes who belonged to the visible kingdom of God before Christ, who were not born of water." *Ans.* You ought, Sir, to have told us where this Scripture evidence is, which proves that what Christ said is not true. Christ saith, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' You say there is Scripture evidence, that multitudes have belonged to the visible kingdom of God before Christ, who were not born of water. Besides, Sir, Christ speaks, Mat. iv. 17. of the kingdom of heaven as not having made its public appearance, but as being then at hand. Where you see fit to contradict Jesus Christ, in direct terms, I leave you to answer it to him.

In the next place, you tell us, "that Christ himself was never born of water." Had you forgotten, or did you suppose that none of your readers would recollect, Mark i. 9, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan?

Again, say you, "Matthew and Levi, Philip and Nathanael, Andrew and Peter, and probably the rest of Christ's disciples, were not born of water, as the commencement of their visible standing as his disciples." But had not these been born of water, baptized, of John? Had not John made them ready?

"The penitent thief upon the cross (say you) was not born of water, and yet the attestation of Christ in his behalf determines him to be a visible member of his kingdom." Here, Sir, you have either a double intention, or you di-

rectly contradict the Saviour; in either case I leave you to your own reflections. Besides, our Lord did not say that the thief belonged to his visible kingdom, but that he should that day be with him in paradise.

Again, you say, "Cornelius, Paul, and the Ethiopian eunuch, were certainly visible believers before they were born of water." Did any person ever deny it? I certainly do not, nor ever did: but this is as far from the subject in debate, as the north is from the south. The question, which you appear to have forgotten, is, Whether any ever belonged to the kingdom of God, the visible church, without being born of water? Not whether any have been believers before they were born of water: for my principle is, and the principle of the Bible is, that none are to be baptized but visible believers, and that such are to be baptized, and thus introduced into the visible church.

5. "Your doctrine (say you to me) is refuted by what you presume is my view of the condition of many who die, either in their infancy, or childhood, or youth, without having ever been immersed."

Ans. Do you suppose that I believe that infants, and children, and youth, who have not been immersed, belong to the visible kingdom of God? If you do, you must certainly must be quite unacquainted with what I believe. Perhaps your idea is this, that I believe some infants, children, and youth, who have not been immersed, may go to heaven, and be finally saved. This, Sir, I do believe; but what hath this to do with the present controversy? As soon as you shall understandingly compare this part of your supposed refutation with the doctrine to be refuted, you will see that they have no connexion with each other, and the one can never be injured by the other.

You close your refutation of my exclusive doctrine, as you term it, by saying, "It is enough, if the single principle of your exclusive doctrine is found to be unscriptural." True, Sir, this would be enough; and had you been able to have found one scripture against it, you would have deserved well; but a thousand texts which say nothing about it, will never prove it unscriptural.

Upon another of my leading principles, you observe,

"IV. To justify your denying us communion at the Lord's table, you say, 'Not the least intimation is given, that ever one was admitted to the Lord's table prior to his being baptized.' In reply to this, I observe,

"1. That our proof that we are baptized is as clear as

yours is that you are baptized." *Ans.* This is the very thing for you to prove.

"2. It is evident (say you) that the disciples were admitted to communion with their Lord at the supper, and yet there is no evidence that they were ever baptized." *Ans.* There is no evidence but they were, and so it helps you not. Such arguments would never help a good cause. Besides, there is evidence that they were baptized, Luke vii. 29. 'And all the people that heard him, — justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John;' and thus it ruins this part of your cause.

"3. The express command of Christ to his followers, indiscriminately, is, Do this in remembrance of me. You must, therefore, prove, either that we are not his followers, or that you have a warrant to dispense with that law, and deny us the privilege of complying with it." Certainly, Sir, I must prove one of these, and nothing is easier than to prove the first—that you are not his followers, in that very example, the copying of which is indispensable, if you will enter into his visible kingdom. Christ was baptized in Jordan; you refuse to be baptized any where; you will only be sprinkled: thus you are not his followers in the first gospel ordinance; and he hath nowhere commanded you, or any others, to partake of the second ordinance, whilst they neglect, much less whilst they deny the first. You have never visibly forsaken all that you have for Christ's sake and the gospel's: in no other way can you become Christ's visible disciples, see Luke xiv. 33. There is but one way pointed out in the gospel, by which we are manifestly to forsake all, at the commencement of our visible discipleship, and that *one* way is to be born, into his kingdom, *of water*, or to be baptized. You reject this counsel of God against yourselves—you refuse to be born of water, or to be baptized; you, therefore, are, in this important article, not his followers, and so *not* of the visible kingdom of heaven. There is no law which requires you to come, till you be followers of Christ, and members of his visible kingdom, nor is there any law of Christ's which allows you to come before: we are, therefore, under obligation to refuse you admittance among us.

You say, again, "You must show us that Christ has somewhere made this deficiency, (i. e. the want of baptism) in all cases, a bar to communion at his table." No, Sir, show us where any have liberty to come with this deficiency about them.

Page 105, you quote the following lines—

“ Do this, he cries, till time shall end,

“ In mem’ry of your dying Friend;

“ Meet at my table and record

“ The love of your departed Lord.”

“ We feel (say you) all the tenderness of this invitation, and solicit a place among the guests.” We say, come and welcome; but come according to the pattern, example, and commandment given. But you make my answer to be very different: you tell the public that my reply to your solicitation is, “ No, avaunt, you are not among the followers of Jesus; you are *unbaptized heathen*.” This, Sir, is an imprudent expression; and I have just cause to call you to account before the public, for manufacturing such an indecent answer, and palming it upon your readers as being mine. You have, Sir, said hard things enough in your pamphlet, without this attempt to make me appear uncivil.

By what you say, pages 106, 107, it is manifest, that you are quite displeas'd with the name given to your denomination, which is peculiarly your own. By the name Pædorantists, you ought ever willingly to be known, till you change your practice. If you dislike your name, do you suppose that the great Head of the church will be pleas'd with your practice, which answers exactly to it? You consider Pædorantists to be a contemptuous name; if it indeed be so, your practice is a contemptuous practice; for the name and the practice perfectly agree together. Your practice is indeed contemptuous, for it contemns the ordinance of Jesus Christ, for which it is substituted. By this substitution you have polluted the ordinance of the Lord, or made it void by the traditions of men; and it is time for you to inquire how you shall answer, when he shall ask by what authority you have done these things. The argument which you now use, that great and learned men have thus done, will be but a poor one then. This argument is no better than the Jews might have used in Nehemiah's day, when their fathers had not kept the feast of tabernacles in its order, according to the command, for a thousand years. The truth is, from the days of *your* fathers ye have gone away from the Lord's ordinance of baptism, and have not kept it. Return unto the Lord, and he will return unto you.

I agree, Sir, never to give you the appellation, Pædorantists, after you shall produce one example, precept, or fair and full Scripture consequence, to show that *sprinkling* is so much as once, in all the Bible, put for Christian baptism.

If this cannot be done, you do not appear to advantage, to manifest any uneasiness at your name, which perfectly designates your practice, and distinguishes your denomination. Your practice, and not your name, should displease you.

You intimate, page 107, that I shall oblige you, and many of your denomination, by explaining what I mean by addressing Mr. Anderson, Brother Anderson. This is easily done: by it I mean this—To manifest my belief that he is born of the Spirit, notwithstanding he refuses to be born of water.

In the close of your Appendix, you appeal from all authors, both Greek and Roman, from Jerome, Calvin, and Dr. Gill, from all corruptions and superadditions of any church, or the world, to that good book, which is by way of eminence called the word of God.

In the last words of your postscript, you make a formal appeal, in these words—“But to the Bible, Sir, to the Bible.” Hast thou appealed unto the Bible? unto the Bible shalt thou go.

Wishing you a full hearing, a fair trial, and your errors a just condemnation,

I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

REVEREND SIR,

HAST thou appealed unto the BIBLE? unto the BIBLE shalt thou go.

Please to attend to the following, and the BIBLE will you see for *Gospel Baptism*.

Here, Sir, is the BIBLE for baptism, to which you have appealed, and by which you and some of your works are now to be tried.

The following are all the texts which clearly speak of gospel baptism.

1. Mat. iii. 5, 6, 7. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him IN Jordan: — but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said, &c.

2. Ver. 11. I indeed baptize you with water, &c.

3. Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him; but John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness: then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.

4. Chap. xxi. 25, 26, 27. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? And they *reasoned* with themselves, &c.

5. Chap. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, &c.

6. Mark i. 4, 5. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him IN the river of Jordan, &c.

7. Ver. 8, 9, 10. I indeed have baptized you with water. — And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John IN Jordan. And straightway, coming *up out of* the water, &c.

8. Chap. xi. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

9. Chap. xvi. 15, 16. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, &c.

10. Luke iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, &c.

11. Ver. 7, 8. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him; &c.

12. Ver. 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized.

13. Ver. 16. I indeed baptize you with water.

14. Ver. 21. Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, &c.

15. Chap. vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the *Pharisees* and *lawyers* rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

16. Chap. xx. 4. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

17. John i. 25, 26. Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water.

18. Ver. 28. Beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

19. Ver. 31. That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

20. Ver. 33. He that sent me to baptize with water.

21. Chap. iii. 5. Except a man be born of *water*, and of the Spirit, &c.

22. Ver. 22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23. Ver. 23. And John also was baptizing in *Ænon*, near to *Salim*, because there was *much water there*; and they came, and were baptized.

24. Ver. 26. Behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

25. Chap. iv. 1, 2. The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)

26. Chap. x. 40. Beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized.

27. Acts i. 5. John truly baptized with water.

28. Ver. 22. Beginning from the baptism of John.

29. Chap. ii. 38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,—and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

30. Ver. 41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.

31. Chap. viii. 12, 13. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, &c.

32. Ver. 16. Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

33. Ver. 36—39. And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both *into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, &c.

34. Chap. ix. 18. And he (Saul) arose, and was baptized.

35. Chap. x. 37. After the baptism which John preached.

36. Ver. 47, 48. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

37. Chap. xi. 16. John indeed baptized with water.

38. Chap. xiii. 24. When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people.

39. Chap. xvi. 15. And when she (Lydia) was baptized, and her household.

40. Ver. 33. And was baptized, he (the jailer) and all his, straightway.

41. Chap. xviii. 8. And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

42. Ver. 25. He (Apollos) spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing *only* the baptism of John.

43. Chap. xix. 3, 4, 5. Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

44. Chap. xxii. 16. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and *wash away* thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

45. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, &c.

46. Ver. 5. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, &c.

47. 1 Cor. i. 13—17. Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; let any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

48. Chap. vi. 11. But ye are washed.

49. Chap. xv. 29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead?

50. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

51. Eph. iv. 5. One baptism.

52. Chap. v. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word.

53. Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.

54. Titus iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, &c.

55. Heb. x. 22. Our *bodies washed* with pure water.

56. 1 Peter iii. 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.

Here, my dear Sir, you have in plain view directly before you all the Bible, so far as it respects the matter of gospel baptism.

The court to which you have appealed is now opened. Now select your witnesses, and have your evidence ready; for to trial you must come. Every text is allowed to be a good witness, and to possess evidence sufficient to set the accused free, upon bearing testimony in his favour.

You are now, Sir, upon your trial before the court of TRUTH; charged with *violating* and *profaning* the *first gospel ordinance*.

Say you, Guilty or not guilty? You say, Not guilty.

Then the trial must proceed.

Where is your text, your witness, which by example, by precept, or by intuitive consequence, testifies that *sprinkling*, or *partial washing*, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is *gospel baptism*. Name your texts, your witnesses. Call them *one by one*. Call them all, if you please.

Mat. iii. 5, 6, 7. is the first. What says this witness? Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, &c. Call all the other witnesses, from Matthew to Peter.

The witnesses having been severally called, and the testimony of each separately taken—

Court. You, S. A. *supposed* that these witnesses, at least some of them, would have spoken in your favour: but *suppositions* do not pass for evidence at this court. What have your witnesses testified? The testimony of each, as it respects your practice, is *Tekel—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*

Now, Sir, for the *trial* of *immersion* for gospel baptism. Call the witnesses one by one. The witnesses being called, the testimony of each is, My plain and common sense of the case is, that immersion is gospel baptism. Call some of the witnesses again. Call Mark i. 5. This witness testifies, that he saw John baptizing a multitude of his disciples in the river of Jordan. Call Mark i. 9. The testimony of this witness is, that he saw John baptizing the *Head and Husband* of the *Church*, Jesus Christ, in *Jordan*; and that he saw him, after the ordinance was administered, *coming up straightway out of the water.* Call Heb. x. 22. This witness affirmeth, that in gospel baptism the subjects had their bodies washed with pure water. Call 1 Peter iii. 21. The testimony of this witness is, that as Noah was saved in the ark from a drowning world, so are the baptized saved in the water from a burning world: that is, baptism being an *anti-lupon* or figure, answering to the figure the ark, it figuratively points out the Saviour's purpose of saving his disciples from a fiery deluge, which shall burn up the world and destroy the ungodly. He, therefore, as a token of his great kindness, directs that they be put all under water in baptism; that not so much as an hair should be singed, or the smell of fire pass on them.

Immersion being tried, is found perfectly innocent, and is pronounced to be the matter of gospel baptism.

Shouldst thou, S. A. yet hesitate whether *sprinkling* may not, in special instances, be allowed, another witness must be again called. Call Eph. iv. 5. One Lord, one faith, *one baptism.*

Court. Our judgment is, that the *error* of S. A. hath no countenance, from any precept, example, or fair consequence, from any thing which hath been said or done by Jesus Christ, or any of his inspired servants.

HAST thou appealed unto the BIBLE? unto the BIBLE shalt thou go.

Please to attend to the following, and the BIBLE you will see for the *Subjects of Gospel Baptism*.

Here, Sir, is, if I mistake not, every text in which the BIBLE manifestly defines the *subjects* of gospel baptism.

1. Mat. iii. 7, 8, 9. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: and *think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.*

2. Ver. 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto *repentance.*

3. Chap. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c.

4. Mark i. 4, 5. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of *repentance* for the *remission* of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, *confessing their sins.*

5. Chap. xvi. 15, 16. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth*, and is baptized, &c.

6. Luke iii. 7, 8, 9. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, *fruits worthy* of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, *We have Abraham to our father.* — And now also the axe is laid unto the *root* of the trees, &c.

7. Ver. 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, *what shall we do?*

8. Chap. vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the *Pharisees* and *lawyers* rejected the *counsel* of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

9. John iii. 5. Except a man be born of *water*, and of the Spirit, &c.

10. Chap. iv. 1. Jesus made and baptized more *disciples* than John.

11. Acts ii. 38. Then Peter said unto them, *Repent*, and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the *remission* of *sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

12. Ver. 41. Then they that *gladly received* his word were *baptized*.

13. Chap. viii. 12, 13. But when they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, &c.

14. Ver. 36, 37. What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he (the eunuch) answered and said, I *believe* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

15. Chap. x. 48. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have *received* the *Holy Ghost* as well as we?

16. Chap. xiii. 24. When John had first preached, before his coming, the *baptism* of *repentance* to all the people.

17. Chap. xvi. 14, 15. A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who *worshipped* God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, &c.

18. Ver. 33, 34. And was baptized, he (the jailer) and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and *rejoiced*, *believing* in God with all his house.

19. Chap. xviii. 8. And many of the Corinthians *hearing*, *believed*, and were *baptized*.

20. Chap. xix. 4, 5. John *verily baptized* with the baptism of *repentance*, saying unto the people, 'That they *should believe* on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized, &c.

21. Chap. xxii. 16. And now, why *tarriest thou?* *arise*, and be baptized, and *wash* away thy *sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.

22. Rom. vi. 3, 4. *Know ye not*, that so many of *us* as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

23. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

24. 1 Peter iii. 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, (*not* the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer* of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here, Sir, you behold, in full view, the court to which you have appealed, to be again in session.

Before this court you, Sir, stand indicted for the following high crimes or misdemeanors: 1. For teaching the people to misunderstand the laws of Christ's kingdom: 2. For doing what you could to bring into this kingdom those who have no gospel liberty to come: 3. For some public attempts to prolong and to increase the blindness of many, as to the subjects of gospel baptism.

You are now set before the court of TRUTH for your trial.

What say you to the indictment? Guilty, or not guilty?

Ans. - Not guilty.

Then you must be proved guilty.

You, as a teacher of the gospel, have taught the people, that the children of believers were to be baptized, on account of their parents' faith.

Court. Read the laws of Christ's kingdom. The laws being read—Not a word is found for you, but much against you; particularly the statutes recorded Mat. iii. 7, 8, 9. Luke iii. 7, 8, 9. and in several other places: you, therefore, stand convicted of the first clause of the indictment.

As to the second clause of the indictment—you have baptized or sprinkled infants and unbelieving children, and thus *intentionally* brought them into Christ's kingdom, or done what you could to place them there.

Court. You confess the fact, but plead that the laws of Christ's kingdom enjoin the practice. Read the laws, that the person on trial may be convicted from the mouth of the law. The laws are read—Not a word is found for infant baptism, baptism for believers' children, or for unbelievers' baptism of any kind. The law speaks of the baptism of believers, and gives liberty for none besides. Hence, you stand convicted of practising the traditions of men: which was, for substance, the second clause of the indictment.

As for the last clause, it is a fact of such public notoriety, you will to that readily plead guilty; otherwise, your Letters to D. M. with the Appendix, will be laid before the court. What say you? *Ans.* Guilty.

Court. The judgment of this court is, that thou, S. A. art guilty, in both matter and form, as set forth in the indictment.

HAST thou appealed unto the BIBLE? unto the BIBLE shalt thou go.

Please to attend to the following, and you will see the BIBLE for *Communicants*.

The following, if I mistake not, is the whole BIBLE, so far as it speaks of the Lord's supper, and defines the qualifications of the accepted guests.

1. Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.

2. Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it: and he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

3. Luke xxii. 19, 20. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

4. Acts ii. 41, 42. Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized*: and the *same day* there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

5. Ver. 46, 47. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and *breaking bread* from house to house. — And the Lord *added* to the *church* daily *such* as should be saved.

6. Chap. xx. 7, 11. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. When he had *broken bread*, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

7. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the *bread*

which we *break*, is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for *we are all partakers* of that one *bread*.

8. Chap. xi. 16, 20. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such *custom*, neither the churches of God. When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

9. Ver. 23—29. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you—That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Here, Sir, you behold the court to which you have appealed, once more convened, for your trial.

You now stand before this court, to answer to the following indictment.

Thou art accused of having insinuated, before the friends and enemies of king Jesus, that he hath left the *order* of his house and worship at such loose ends, that it cannot be determined, from the rules given, in what order the two great gospel ordinances are to be administered—whether the first last, or the last first; or whether it be of any consequence which shall have the priority: that is, whether baptism shall precede the Lord's supper, or the Lord's supper precede baptism; or whether it be of consequence which shall be first.

Counsellor. Sir, every dictate of prudence strongly suggests to you, that your wisdom is, to plead guilty, and cast yourself upon the mercy of the court. Should you not, out of your own mouth you will be condemned. Your Letters to D. M. and your Appendix, both pronounce you, Guilty, guilty.

Court. What say you? Guilty, or not guilty?

Ans. Guilty.

Court. Read all the King's laws which relate to the subject; for the violation of which S. A. hath been here indicted, and to which indictment he pleads guilty; that if he will show himself an honest man, he may be no more arraigned before us for any similar misdemeanors. Read distinctly Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. Mark xiv. 22, 23. &c. Dost thou, S. A. see, and perfectly understand, that there is no law, statute, or clause, which affords the least possible plea, that any ever was, or of right should be, admitted to the table of the Lord, before he submitted to the ordinance of baptism? and that the order of Christ's house is plainly set forth? Is farther light needed? read Luke vii. 29, 30; read also Luke i. 17. where John's work is described to be to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Read also what took place whilst John was making ready this people, and preparing them for the Lord, Mat. iii. 1—6. John preached repentance, and the baptism of repentance, and baptized them in the river of Jordan. Read again, Acts ii. 41, 42. They that gladly received his word were baptized, &c.

Court. Thou, S. A. hast been indicted before this court—
 1. For having perverted the gospel baptism, by changing it for sprinkling, an invention of men—2. For pleading that you, and consequently that your children, have Abraham to your father, and that on this account they were fit subjects of gospel baptism, and that in this way thou hast violated the laws of Christ, as to the subjects of baptism—3. For having impeached the honour of the Christian Lawgiver, by teaching that matters were left by him at uncertainties, what and how things should be done in his house and kingdom, the church, and for several other collateral offences. Thou didst well by appealing to this court, that thou mightest have a full hearing, and receive judgment without partiality. This court having taken every part of each trial, had before them, into full consideration, find thee, S. A. *guilty, guilty, guilty*, as set forth in the several indictments. The sentence which the court shall inflict on thee, will not be publicly pronounced this day: the court, however, from motives of compassion, see fit to inform thee, that should repentance, manifested by reformation, be found in thee, their sentence will be mixed with very much mercy.

Thou art now permitted to go, for a few days, whither thou wilt, and no man shall hurt thee, provided thou hast continually about thee the King's laws, which thou hast violated, and do not openly transgress them in future.

THE principal part of what I purposed to say to you, Sir, in the public hearing, I have now said: you must, however, permit me to say a few things more.

Among the many things which might be mentioned to profit, the following only will find place for the present.

1. It is worthy of the reader's particular observation, that you have not found so much as one text, which says so much as one word about sprinkling as being gospel baptism; not one precept, not one example, nor one plain consequence, which shows sprinkling to be from heaven: and had you not forbidden me to go to Rome, I could have shown that sprinkling for baptism was one of the children of the man of sin. It must appear a singular matter, to every person of discernment, that you should forbid me to go to the ancient fathers, to prove your practice to be of men, when you, at the same time, take the liberty to bring in the modern fathers, to show your doctrine from heaven. Do you not know, Sir, that in this particular you have exactly imitated the pope and his clergy? They would not submit to have their errors confronted by the writings of the ancient fathers, but they would prove the purity of their present practice, because his holiness the pope, and his holy catholic church, have thus practised for many years.

2. It is not unworthy of critical attention, why you have not, and why you cannot, produce one Scripture precept, example, or fair consequence, to prove that ever one infant, child, or servant, or soldier, was baptized upon the faith of another, or because the parent, master, captain, or some other person believed. The reason why you produced no scripture which was to your point, is but too manifest; you had none to bring.

3. Another consideration you are desired to take into serious and immediate contemplation: it is this—You are accountable, not to men only, but to the Lord, for your supposititious attempts to keep the ignorant and credulous in the belief and practice of their superstitious and antichristian traditions. If you have any thing in favour of infant sprinkling, or infant baptism, which can bear the light of truth, we wish you to usher it forth to public view as soon as possible: but if you have nothing but conjectures, suppositions, and dubious, uncertain consequences, we wish you to let them sleep in their native darkness; for as often as you, or your brethren, make such dark and benighted attempts, to palm upon the Christian world the inventions of

men for the ordinances of Heaven, you reproach your Maker. His ordinances and positive institutions never did, do not now, and never will, stand in need of such blind arguments to give them currency; the bare supposition that they do, is a reflection upon his benevolence, or upon his wisdom.

4. Another thought I wish to suggest, for your consideration: it is this—Should you be dissatisfied with the judgment which the Scriptures have passed upon your traditional practices, you are desired to remember, that *by them you and your works* are to be tried; and happy for you, if your works only shall be burnt up. It will be for you but a poor plea, at the judgment, to say, Many, of reputation, believed and practised with you. You have appealed to the Bible; if you will hearken to it, it will be well; otherwise, the blood of many may be required at your hands. I sincerely wish that you may repent of your deeds, and yet be a burning and a shining light in some golden candlestick. Not that you might believe as I do, but that you might believe and practise as the gospel enjoins, and no more wound the *suffering flock* of God, and cause the daughters of the uncircumcised to rejoice, and the hypocrites and unbelievers to triumph over the church.

What yet remains to be laid before you, is a few deductions or consequences from what we have passed over.

1. The sum total of your arguments against the reasonings in my Sermons, is a *collection of suppositions*, which you say are *miserable arguments*.

2. Your Examination of my Sermons hath a tendency to lengthen, and perhaps to augment, the difference between your denomination and the Baptists; but it hath no direct aptitude towards settling the dispute. The Baptists are, generally speaking, determined to abide by the judgment of the court of truth; before which both your pamphlet and your practice have been tried and condemned.

3. Another consequence is, that you have darkened the counsel of the Lord by words without knowledge: this is the best which we can say of your performance, seeing by it you have attempted to turn us from the right ways of the Lord.

4. Another consequence is, you have, so far as you could, taken from the people the *key* of knowledge, by representing plain truths in such a wrong manner, as to lead your prejudiced readers to believe, that there is very little or no truth

revealed, as to the important subjects on which you have written.

5. You have implicitly contradicted the Bible, in that you have obviously intimated that there are divers kinds of Christian baptisms, when the Bible says, One baptism.

6. It appears that you have done what you could to remove the land-mark of the King of Israel: you have, without authority, and contrary from the plain tenor of the New Testament, informed us, that persons may be members of the visible church of Christ, and not yet baptized. Besides, you have spoken lightly, or at least very inconsiderately, of the divine rite of Christian baptism; you have treated it as being, in a great degree, an uncertain and unimportant ordinance.

7. Another consequence is, that unless your traditionary rite of sprinkling, your tradition of infant baptism, and your *newly invented scheme of admitting unbaptized* persons to the Lord's table, can obtain a stronger support than your suppositions, or others like them, they will all of them be treated as intruders, and relics of popery, so far as truth shall obtain a candid hearing.

8. You and your denomination not only reject the counsel of God against yourselves, being not baptized, and so will not enter into the visible kingdom of Christ, but them who are entering in ye hinder.

9. Another deduction, which appears naturally to flow from what hath been said, is, that had you been on Bible ground, the Scriptures would not have failed you on every point, so as not to have lent you one fair argument, either from precept or fact, or from intuitive consequence. But, Sir, the fact is too notorious for you honourably to deny it, that you have not even so much as one fair argument from the Bible, (and you have appealed to it,) to support either sprinkling, infant baptism, or unbaptized church members, or for communion with those who reject the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized, only sprinkled according to man's inventions.

10. The reason why you and many others have had so much difficulty in preventing Christians of their societies from embracing immersion, as gospel baptism, is because it is so plainly taught in the Bible. We likewise see the foundation of your difficulty, in satisfying your hearers that *sprinkling, man's substitute* for baptism, will answer for the first Christian ordinance: it is this—nothing is found in the Bible

for this sprinkling substitute, which is fast going into disrepute; it will soon be in perpetual disgrace.

11. Another deduction is, that the public should be advertized, that, should you present them with your proposed volume, they are not to expect, that when you treat on baptism, on the subjects of baptism, or on unbaptized church members, or on unbaptized communicants, that you will produce one plain text from the Bible, to prove your sentiments correct; but that they will probably find many texts, which have no direct connexion with either of the subjects, produced to prove each, respectively; for the public ought not to expect impossibilities: and as the Bible is *totally, totally* silent, as to countenancing either of the subjects, which you expect to set in a clear point of view, no text, direct for either of them, can justly be looked for.

You do, indeed, Sir, appear to me to possess a curious position: for you would make a singular figure before the public, should you go to Greece or Rome, to popes or cardinals, councils or conclaves for evidence, since you have forbidden me to argue from any similar source; and, at the same time, you have appealed to the Bible, and that hath nothing to say for you, directly or indirectly: you find nothing for you there, but silence on the one hand, and on the other many precepts and examples, enjoining it upon you to change both your words and practice. In this position, and thus circumstanced, you are just publishing a volume to rectify mistakes, and to set these controverted subjects in a clear point of view. You certainly would do well to consult the Bible, and take advice of the Scriptures, before you proceed any farther. Cursed be he that *handleth the word of God, or doeth his work, deceitfully.*

Lastly. Another consequence is, that every person may consider himself to be again at full liberty to read my Seven Sermons, if he please: for though there be but *little* of argument in them, yet your Examination is found not to be able to disprove *that little*. It is, therefore, obvious that they possess as much of argument as they ever did, together with this advantageous circumstance, that they have, without receiving material injury, sustained the first public general attack. Nor will you, or any of your denomination, be ever able to destroy the immovable *basis* on which the principal arguments in my Sermons are founded. Their foundation is the broad basis of revelation. Would you maintain

your ground, in this day of *light, liberty, and inquiry*, it would probably be your wisdom, to be as *totally* silent, as to any mention of your errors, as the Scriptures are with relation to any defence of them.

With grief for your errors,
with affection for your person,
with esteem for your general character,
and desires for your speedy reformation,
I am, dear Sir, sincerely yours,

DANIEL MERRILL.

*A few words for Rev. SAMUEL WORCESTER,
of Salem.*

THE author of the foregoing Letters does most sincerely regret, that any personal and public abuse and obloquy should be resorted to by Mr. Worcester, of Salem, in defence of the present very interesting and solemn controversy. He also sincerely regrets, that the same Mr. Worcester should publish to the world several unfounded assertions, or great misrepresentations, that he might in this way support his unstable cause. Truth wants no such auxiliaries, and error cannot be always supported by them.

The following are considered to be unfounded assertions, or great misrepresentations.

1. Says Mr. Worcester,* “Even the author of Seven Sermons, on the mode and subjects of baptism, *desires to thank God that he knows the Greek as well as any man.*”

2. The same Mr. Worcester informs the public,† that the “author of Letters to Mr. Anderson, has not only *gratuitously coined, and contemptuously bestowed upon us a new name, but because he found that John, the harbinger of Christ, is called a Baptist, very shrewdly concludes those who were baptized by John were also Baptists, &c.; but upon being asked, by the author of these discourses, whether the term Baptist was applied to John in the same sense in which it is now applied to those who are called Baptists, he confessed the truth, and said it was not.*”

3. The same Mr. Worcester tells us, page 62, that “the same reasoning, *if reasoning it must be called, by which it was supposed to be proved that the Waldenses, Wickliffites, Hussites, and other witnesses for the truth in the dark ages, were Antipædobaptists, would equally prove that the Tabernacle church are Antipædobaptists. This the writer of the Miniature History has himself been brought to acknowledge.*”

Had these unfounded assertions, or great misrepresentations, of Mr. Worcester's, affected merely the private character and feelings of him whom they implicate, he might have left them, after denying their correctness, to the future consideration of Mr. Worcester, and to the just censure of every candid writer and reader of theological disputation. But when a public teacher of religion shall practise such kind of management, to prepossess and to prejudice the minds of his hearers and readers against the truth, he ought to expect some suitable correction. This the author of the Miniature History, and of the Letters to Mr. Anderson, expects to endeavour, as soon as he shall have leisure. In the mean time, Mr. Worcester is called upon to make his assertions good, if he be able to: he is desired, however, to do it in such a manner, that the public may not consider him to be contending with an enemy, nor with one whom he may with impunity treat with contempt.

* See his *Discourses*, page 69.

† *Discourses*, page 66.

The author of the *Miniature History* takes liberty just to observe, that he does not believe, also that he never did believe, and that he never acknowledged, that the same reasoning by which the Waldenses, &c. were proved to be Antipædo-Baptists, would prove the Tabernacle church in Salem to be so: nor did he ever make any similar concession, but upon supposition that this proposition of Mr. Worcester's was correct—*That the Tabernacle church held to the same great and leading maxim with the Waldenses, &c.*; which the author considered, and still considers, to be Mr. Worcester's mistake.

This maxim of the Waldenses, &c. is, "*That the kingdom of Christ, or the visible church, be had established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought, therefore, to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests, to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors.*"

Let Mr. Worcester show, if he can, that the Tabernacle church adopt this maxim, not in *part*, but in *whole*, and that their practice does, in fact, correspond with it, and that thoroughly; then shall it be conceded to him, that, so far as the argument depends on this great leading maxim, the same reasoning which proves the Waldenses, &c. to be Antipædo-baptists, will prove the Tabernacle church to be so.

The author of *Letters to Mr. Anderson* also takes liberty to observe, that his sentiment of John's being called the Baptist is, that he was thus called because he *baptized*, and that every Baptist minister is called a Baptist for the same identical reason for which John was thus called; and that the brethren among the Baptists are thus called, not because they are *baptizers*, but because they are *baptized*.

The author of the *Seven Sermons, Miniature History, &c.* never uttered or published the expression in the first great misrepresentation of Mr. Worcester,* nor made concessions or acknowledgments to him, but in agreement with the above statement. Mr. Worcester will account to himself, to his people, and to the public, for his assertions, in the best manner he can.

One acknowledgment I most frankly make to Mr. Worcester: it is this—That I am really pained that he hath compelled me thus publickly to contradict his public statements. The fault is his, and the damage he will sustain.

THE AUTHOR.

Sedgwick, December 25, 1805.

* I may, when urged by blind gainsayers, have said something to the following purport—That I understood the Greek words which relate to the ordinance of baptism, as well as do the opposers; but never did I say, or intentionally so much as intimate, what Mr. Worcester most ungenerously and manifestly charges to my account.

